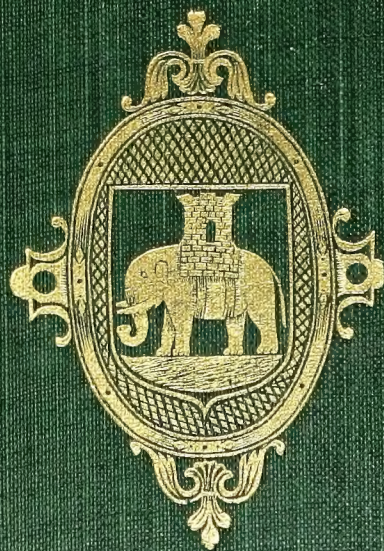
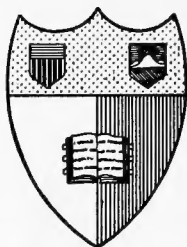


PARLIAMENTARY
REPRESENTATION
OF THE
CITY OF COVENTRY

T.W. WHITLEY



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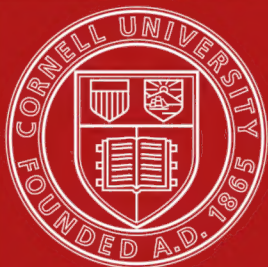
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THE
Parliamentary Representation
OF THE
CITY OF COVENTRY
FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES TO PRESENT DATE.

BEING AN ACCOUNT OF THE VARIOUS ELECTIONS, CONTESTS, PETITIONS,
LIVES OF MEMBERS, BROADSHEETS, CHRONICLES, PAMPHLETS,
SONGS, &c., &c., FORMING THE POLITICAL ANNALS OF
THE CITY OF COVENTRY.

ILLUSTRATED WITH PORTRAITS OF MEMBERS, MAYORS, RECORDERS, BENEFACTORS, AND OTHERS,
COPIES OF ELECTION CARTOONS AND LITERATURE, A SERIES OF PLANS OF THE CITY AT
VARIOUS TIMES, AND SKETCHES OF LOCAL INTEREST.

BY
T. W. WHITLEY,

*Author of "Humorous Reminiscences of Coventry Life," "Castles, Camps, and Earthworks of Warwickshire,"
"Coventry Coaching and Coach Roads," &c., &c.*

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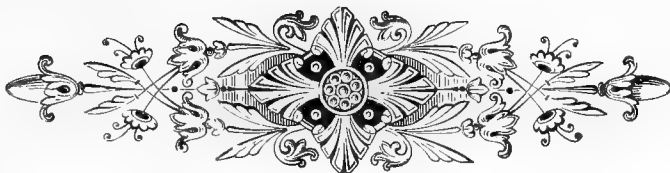
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GODFREY
UNIVERSITY

TO
THE MAYOR (GEORGE SINGER, ESQ.),
ALDERMEN, AND CITIZENS
OF COVENTRY,
This Volume:
THE
PARLIAMENTARY REPRESENTATION
OF THE
CITY OF COVENTRY,
FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES
TO PRESENT DATE;
IS MOST RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED BY
THE AUTHOR.

COVENTRY :
PRINTED BY CURTIS AND BEAMISH,
HERTFORD STREET.



PREFACE.



THE story of "THE PARLIAMENTARY REPRESENTATION OF THE CITY OF COVENTRY, FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES TO PRESENT DATE," is one of continued change, recording as it does the political annals of the City through successive generations, and describing the various Representatives as they appear on the scene, during the six hundred years, or thereabouts, which have passed since Aunketil de Coleshull and Richard de Weston were returned as Burgesses in 1295.

In an ancient City of so many years growth as Coventry, naturally very considerable material exists wherewith to form a history, but although only the Parliamentary portion has been, by choice, chiefly treated in these pages, it has also been found necessary to add other portions—Civil, Municipal, Ecclesiastical, or Military—at various places. No work upon Coventry has heretofore described the Town's history in so full a chronological form, and it is hoped that the preservation of the most interesting matters connected with past hard-fought contests in the City may not be uninteresting. At first a much smaller volume was intended than the present one, but, with the increase of information of an interesting character, it afterwards became expedient to issue the work, to Subscribers, in its present form.

It was not the intention at first to illustrate the volume, but afterwards the photographs were included. The numerous portraits of local worthies, introduced at considerable cost and trouble, will doubtless add to the usefulness and interest of the work, for they not only show the kind of men our City's Representatives, Recorders, and Mayors were, but portray the dress worn by succeeding generations. The poems of a nation are often useful records of its history, and those of Coventry depict numerous incidents in the

Town's story, and form disjointed fragments and registers of local events. Coventry was rich with political songs in the past, but although many could not be inserted in these pages for want of space, those shown are evidences of musical taste in the people. It has been found impossible to include more than a list of those peculiar broadsheets of the Reform Bill times called "Chronicles." The cartoons illustrate the humour of past elections. Many public and private collections, various museums, libraries, and authorities have been searched for information; the returns of the House have been largely consulted, and considerable interesting matter obtained from local and other MSS., kindly lent to the Author for the work. In extenuation of any errors or omissions that may be found (and some doubtless will occur), must be pleaded the perplexing nature of the matter to hand, and the difficulty of arranging and reducing to order the vast mass of material which required examination.

The Author has to express his gratitude for the help received from numerous members of the nobility, gentry, clergy, and friends, who have aided him with information and research during the compilation of the volume. To the various ladies and gentlemen who have kindly allowed paintings, prints, or photographs of local celebrities, or seals or medals, in their possession, to be copied for reproduction, his very best thanks are due (especially to the Right Hon. Lady Knightley and Mrs. W. Lynes, to the Right Hon. Lord Belper, the late Colonel F. W. Newdigate, G. F. Muntz, Esq., W. Butlin, Esq., John Mills, Esq., Rev. H. Mills, Colonel A. J. Copeland, V. H. W. Wingrave, Esq., F. Bird, Esq., H. Band, Esq., junr., Mr. J. B. Mercer, Mr. J. J. Moore, and Mr. J. J. Barnett); as they are also to Sidney Colvin, Esq., and the authorities at the British Museum, for copies from portraits in the Prints Department; to E. W. B. Nicholson, Esq., Chief Librarian of the Bodleian Library, Oxford, and to the Rev. J. S. Treacher, for copies of portraits from the Sutherland and Hope Collections, and to the former for the use of the Reader Collection of Coventry Election Literature; as also to Mr. W. F. Thurland, of that Institution, and to Mr. A. S. Eden, for their kindness and aid; to C. Welch, Esq., Chief Librarian, Guildhall, London, for valued assistance and favours; to J. D. Mullins, Esq., Librarian of the Birmingham Reference Library, for copies of engravings in the Aylesford Collection, etc.; to Edward Brown, Esq., Librarian of the Coventry Reference Library, for copies of portraits from that most interesting compilation of local research and energy, Mr. Edwin Mander's Collection, and

for assistance rendered by various books and references. To different gentlemen lending cartoons or blocks for reproduction thanks are likewise due. To the late and present Town Clerks of Coventry, Thomas Browett, Esq., and Lewis Beard, Esq., as to William Browett, Esq., and Mr. George Sutton, for their valued aid and assistance on many occasions, the Author is exceedingly grateful. Many of the autographs are from letters or documents in the possession of the Corporation of Coventry, the Author's collection, or from private correspondence to various gentlemen. They are of considerable interest, and to those who have kindly lent them to be copied, the Author also wishes to express his thanks. To the numerous photographers, whose portraits of later Members and Candidates help most materially to enliven these pages, and whose names are under their respective photographs, the Author has to express to one and all his best acknowledgments for permission to reproduce their most excellent work in this volume. Chief amongst them will be found the exceedingly good portraits of the late Lord Cheylesmore, by Arthur Marx, Hamburg, and W. H. W. Ballantine, Esq., M.P., by Mr. J. Russell and Sons, London, Colonel H. F. Eaton, by Mr. J. Edwards, London, and C. J. Murray, Esq., by Mr. F. Lupson, Coventry. Mr. Graham's (Leamington) portrait of the Speaker, the Right Hon. A. W. Peel, when a younger man, is a capital one, and that of Sir U. Kay-Shuttleworth, Bart., M.P., by Messrs. Byrne and Co., Richmond, is an admirable likeness and excellent photograph; as are the productions of Mr. A. J. Melhuish, London, Mr. R. W. Thrupp, Birmingham, Mr. R. V. Green, Coventry, Mr. E. Smith, London, and others. To printers and to lithographers, and to all who have in any other way contributed to the book's success, thanks are due. And lastly, but not least, the Author also wishes to express his gratitude to the Subscribers.

In conclusion, it is desired that "THE PARLIAMENTARY REPRESENTATION OF COVENTRY" will interest the present and future generations in the ways and doings of Coventry's chief townsmen of the past, and prove a valuable acquisition to the history of the City. Although the work has taken the leisure of five or six years in compiling, but four hundred copies have been printed. It has been the aim to present a readable book, to graphically describe the story of electioneering in Coventry, and to form a chronicle of local events. An endeavour has been made to record matters with fairness, and neither time nor labour have been spared in the compilation to make the volume worthy of reference.

T. W. WHITLEY.

Coventry, March 21st, 1894.

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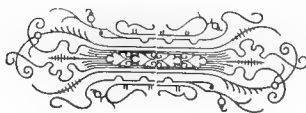
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THE
PARLIAMENTARY REPRESENTATION
OF THE
CITY OF COVENTRY,
FROM EARLIEST TIMES TO PRESENT DATE.

CHAPTER I.

THE EARLY TOWN: ITS LORDS AND PEOPLE.

From commencement to King John (A.D. 1200).

Coventry from British to Saxon times—The Nunnery—Saint Osburg the Abbess—Destruction of the House—Archbishop Ethelnoth's gift—The Convent town—Land tenure—Earl Leofric and Lady Godiva—Foundation of a Benedictine Abbey—Leofwine the Abbot—Charters—Confirmed by King and Pope—Rights and Privileges—Manorial division—King William's Charter—Domesday Survey—Church land left out, the Earl's included—The Saxon Wittenagemot—Earls and Priors in Parliament—The Castle of Coventry—Sieges by Robert Marmion and King Stephen—The Castle destroyed—King Henry and the Earldom of Chester—Barons of Arundel—Cheylesmore—Lords De Montalt—The Church's part—Office of Abbot suppressed—A Prior instituted—The City and See—Bishops of Coventry—Bishop De Novant—Removes the See—Quarrels with the Monks and turns them out—Secular Canons introduced—The Monks restored.

COVENTRY may have been inhabited in the Romano-British period, as traces of early occupation, with Roman coins, a regular pavement, and a statuette in marble have been found at various times in the centre of the City. However such an origin may be questioned, there appears little reason to doubt, that in spite of national troubles, it had become a village community in Saxon days. Probably the earliest settlement was the home of a family, attracted to the spot by a prospect of obtaining livelihood with hunting in the woodlands, and by the fishing

and water supply obtainable in the neighbouring streams and pools. Little as this habitation would be, it increased in time, with the arrival of new comers from kindred families, when the inhabitants becoming more permanently settled, tended their cattle and sheep, or occupied themselves with the duties of husbandry in the open lands around.

A Nunnery became established at Coventry before the year 1016, "of which Saint Osburg the Virgin was in times past, Abbess." It was destroyed by the Danes in that year, but a religious body evidently survived the destruction, for in 1022, Archbishop Ethelnoth transmitted the arm of St. Augustine of Hippo, to Coventry, as a sacred relic, and Canute is said to have been a benefactor to the Church.

The land belonged to Leofric, Earl of Mercia, and his Countess Godiva, sister of Thorold, Sheriff of Lincoln. They possibly had some kind of residence thereon, and held the estate by tenure of certain rights due to the Crown. Leofric, with the consent of King Edward the Confessor, and Pope Alexander, commenced erecting the great Benedictine Abbey at Coventry, in which he was assisted by the Countess and their family. He instituted his relative Leofwine as Abbot, and gave by Charter, at the dedication in 1043, a moiety of the Town upon which the Convent stood, together with twenty-four Lordships, for the maintenance of the Abbot and a similar number of Monks. King Edward confirmed the Earl's Charter, and with these possessions were given certain privileges of a judicial nature, market rights, and the power to maintain watch and ward.

The King in his Charter speaks of the Church as "in the Town which they call Coventre," and the granting of these rights show that there was a community over which they could be enforced, whilst the Earl and his successors would doubtless retain them over their remaining portion. Thus Coventry existed as a Town before the Norman Conquest. Leofric died in 1057, and his son Algar (who confirmed the privileges) in 1059. The Lady Godiva afterwards held the southern portion. The year of her death is uncertain, but within the Church of their foundation, the Earl, his Countess, and son were buried.

Through Leofric's gift two distinct properties were formed in the township, having limits and bounds, being more or less the forerunners of the two parishes, with their separate Churches and Incumbents. The Monastic lands apparently contained the more ancient Town, and lay to the north, whilst the Earl's portion, the larger estate of the two, though less populated, lay chiefly southward.

King William confirmed their lands and rights to the Monks in a Charter, but Domesday survey (completed about 1086) mentions only the southern part, for the land of the Church of Coventry, whereon the Monastery itself stood, is left out, although other manors and lands belonging to it are included. This is unfortunate, for, as the more ancient Town stood northward, the population of the Church's portion can but be guessed at, whilst no account of the number of people, their houses, or the

liberties and customs of the place are shown. The Monks possessed thirty-six messuages in Warwick, thirty in Leicester, and they must necessarily have had a number in Coventry for their tenants also.

After the death of the Countess Godiva, the southern half of Coventry was probably held in the hands of the Crown until 1125, when it came by marriage with the Saxon heiress Lucy, to Ranulf, Earl of Chester.

The kingdoms of the Saxon Heptarchy each had a National Council called a Wittenagemot, at which all the Witan, or members of the Assembly, were called by their Prince upon such affairs of state and points of government, as the laws of the people did not allow him to decide on his own authority. With the Norman Conquest the Saxon form of power terminated, and King William's sway became absolute. Instituting new forms, he established the feudal laws, and whilst many of the English freeholders were dispossessed, a Great Council of the Barons was instituted, having the King at its head. Both Norman Earls of Chester and Priors of Coventry sat therein by the service of their Baronies. The Earls had their own Parliaments as Lords of the Palatinate of Chester. Those connected with Coventry were :—

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|------------------|------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Ranulf Meschines | 3rd Earl, 1125 to 1129 | Hugh Kevilioc | 5th Earl, 1153 to 1181 |
| Ranulf Gernons | 4th Earl, 1129 to 1153 | Ranulf Blundeville | 6th Earl, 1181 to 1232 |

John le Scot, 7th Earl, 1232 to 1237, who died without issue.

The Earls had a Castle at Coventry, which they confided to the care of a Constable ; and it appears to have stood upon the high ground between St. Michael's churchyard and Broadgate, as early Charters and other evidences show, the entrance being at the latter place, which yet retains the name. It was besieged by Robert Marmion in 1141-2, who, seizing the Monastery, turned out the Monks, and constructed ditches and defences. Forgetting, however, their exact site, he fell into one of them, and was killed by the Earl's soldiers. About the same time Earl Ranulf obtained Lincoln Castle, and soon after took King Stephen prisoner, but subsequently released him. Two years later the King and Earl became reconciled, but Stephen, suspecting treachery, seized the Earl at the Castle of Northampton, and imprisoned him until he had delivered over Lincoln, Coventry, and other Castles. Earl Ranulf being restored to liberty, quickly forgot his promises of fidelity to King Stephen, and, raising an army, besieged Lincoln. Ranulf likewise successfully blocked up the Castle of Coventry, in which the King's adherents were, until Stephen came to its relief, and attempted to force a passage through the Earl's army. During the first skirmish the King received a wound, and had to retire, but, on his recovery, fell with such fury upon the besiegers, that he killed a number in battle and took many prisoners. The Earl himself was nearly slain, but managed to escape with a few of his men, when the King, being master of the field, relieved the garrison and proceeded to pull down the Castle.

Subsequently it was repaired, for the position is mentioned in a deed made in 1151.

In 1173 Earl Hugh, and Robert, Earl of Leicester, rebelled against King Henry II., in favour of Prince Henry, that King's son; when Richard de Lucy was sent by the King against them, to besiege Coventry, Leicester, and their other places, which he destroyed, and burnt the towns, whose tenants having adhered to their lords against the King, had their liberties seized, to regain which they were put to fine, those of Leicester in 300 marks, and those of Coventry in 200. These Earls thereupon caused great trouble by sea and land for some three years, but at length obtaining the King's pardon, they became reinstated in favour. Their lands were restored, and the townsmen of Coventry having paid a reduced fine of twenty marks, regained their liberties, obtained the King's Confirmation Charter in 1182, and had licence to rebuild their dwellings. With the death of the last Norman Earl of Chester in 1237, the Castle which had been dismantled fell into decay, and little more than "a fortlet or pile standing in the Earl's street," probably the Keep "where the Earls of Chester did make their abode," was then left thereof. By its removal the burgesses were enabled to build, and increase the number of their houses in the midst of the town.

King Henry III. resumed the County of Chester into his own hands, and soon created his son Earl of it, but divided the lands between the sisters and co-heiresses of Earl Ranulf, whereupon the Earl of Arundel, by his marriage with Mabel, one of the sisters, possessed the southern part of Coventry, where, "finding the Castle ruinous, he built a house at Cheylesmore without the ancient Town, and laid out a park adjoining, after the fashion of the times." The Earls of Arundel who held it were,

William de Albany, 4th Earl, 1237. Hugh de Albany, 5th Earl, died without issue 1243.

The southern Manor then came to the Lord Roger de Montalt, who had married the heiress Cecily, and it remained to their descendants for nearly a century, during which period Cheylesmore was one of their residences.

The Montalts had from King Stephen's time sat with the Earl of Chester's Barons in the Councils of the Palatinate. They were :—

Roger de Montalt, who succeeded in 1243. He was one of twelve "Probes Homines" chosen by the Barons in 1243, to treat with the King's Council, for all the Commons, or the whole Community of the land upon public business, and was a Commissioner to consider what aid should be given to the King. He died in 1260, and was succeeded by his son

John de Montalt, who died in 1262.

Robert de Montalt, his brother, inherited. He had Court with Assize attached to the Manor of Cheylesmore, and a Steward to manage it. He died in 1274.

Roger de Montalt came into possession. This Lord had taken part with the discontented Barons in 1265, but was summoned by King Edward I. to Parliament 1294, and died in 1297.

Robert de Montalt, his brother, succeeded. He was summoned to Parliament from 1298 to 1329, and signed the Baron's protest against the Pope's claim to the Kingdom of Scotland in 1301. He died without issue.

Meanwhile the northern part of Coventry remained in the possession of the Church. The office of Abbot was suppressed in 1095, after three Saxon occupants had filled the chair, and a Prior instituted instead, but the House lost none of its rights and dignities by the change, and the Prior was summoned to the Great Councils as the Abbots had been beforetime. Lymesy, Bishop of Chester, created the See of Coventry in 1102, and himself became its first Bishop. The Town was thus raised to the dignity of a City. He and his successors, who took the title "of Coventry," were—

Robert de Lymesy, First Bishop of Coventry, 1102 to 1117. Buried in the Cathedral Church, the See being vacant for four years after his death.

Robert Pecham, or Peach, Second Bishop, from 1121 to 1127. He also was buried at Coventry, and after his death the See was vacant for two years.

Roger de Clinton, Third Bishop, paying a large fine to the King for the preferment; consecrated 1129; became a Crusader, and died at Antioch 1149.

Walter Durden was more inclined to peace, and ruled as Fourth Bishop from 1149 to 1160. He excommunicated Earl Ranulf, but that lord's wife and son afterwards gave Stivichall to the Priory for his absolution. Buried at Coventry.

Richard Peach, Fifth Bishop, received consecration 1161, resigned, and died 1182.

Gerard le Pucelle, Sixth Bishop, consecrated 1183, was the last to style himself "of Coventry" only. Died 1185, and was buried in the Minister Church.

Three years after, Hugh de Novant, being chosen Bishop, removed his seat to Lichfield, and the title became changed to "Coventry and Lichfield," each Chapter alternately choosing a Bishop, who had a Cathedral Church in either City. De Novant was no friend to the Benedictines; he starved the Monks and obtained their possessions by a Royal grant. Holding a Synod in the Church, he fell into dispute with them, wherein they broke his head with a cross. Bishop Hugh thereupon obtained their expulsion, and placed Canons Secular in the Monastery. In a Parliament called at Nottingham, 1194, at which Earl Ranulf was present, King Richard I. demanded judgment against De Novant, for conspiracy with Prince John, during his absence. Two years after he obtained the Royal favour, and paid two thousand marks to regain the Bishopric, but the Monks were subsequently restored in 1198.

CHAPTER II.

THE DAWN OF BOROUGH REPRESENTATION.

From John (1201) to Edward I. (1295).

Increasing prosperity—Churches—Hospitals established—Grey Friars' foundation—The Town—The Priors' purchase and exemptions—Cheylesmore retained by De Montalt—Priors' freedom from County Court—Coroner appointed—Guild established—Merchants and Trades—Markets and Fairs—The Burgesses and their holdings—Charters of the Earl and King—A Town Court granted, and Justice to be chosen—The Laws of Lincoln—Town paved—Bailiffs appointed—Magna Carta—Improved Representation—Burgesses and taxes—Barons' wars—A Parliament—Decree of Kenilworth and a Royalists' Committee—Coventry's first Representation—The Sheriff and the King's Writ—Choice of Burgesses—Aunketil de Coleshull and Richard de Weston chosen—An aid granted, and its collection.



AGAIN the Monastery flourished, and additional grants came into its chests. The Town's prosperity was chiefly dependent upon the welfare of the Church, and the Chapel of St. Michael's, with other Chapels outside the City, were given by the Earl to the Priory. About the commencement of Henry the Third's reign, two hospitals were erected, one by the Prior at the Burgess, for the poor and infirm, the other by Earl Hugh, for lepers, in the west suburbs.

An important spiritual movement brought the Franciscans, or Grey Friars, into England, and Earl Ranulph, about 1230, allowed them a settlement in his portion of Coventry, yet without the Town. They held no grant of lands, but had his and his successor's protection, living upon the alms and charity of the devout people in the district. In spite of Monkish opposition, their humble Oratory grew into a spacious Friary and Church, and their godly living gave them many friends amongst the chief persons of the City and neighbourhood, many of whom were buried in their chapels. The Friars improved religious teaching, led men to think more for themselves, and in part prepared them for the constitutional struggles of Henry the Third's reign.

Coventry, like most Saxon towns and villages, was situate upon a hill. The Monastic part included Bishop Street, Silver Street, and Cook Street, with lanes adjoining, the Burgess to Cross Cheaping, where was "the Priors' market place before the Cross." Beyond the Broadgate, in the Lord's part, was "the street of the Earl," Smithford and Gosford Streets, "the Earl's mill lane," Great Park Street, and the ways to Cheylesmore. The houses were chiefly built of wood and earth, one storey in height,

with thatched roofs. Inside them little furniture, light, or comfort was to be found.

Prior Brightwalton, in 1250, purchased from Lord Roger de Montalt a large portion of the southern Manor in fee-farm, paying annually the large rent in those days of £100 for the same, which, on comparison with payments made for other places, proves the Town to be of considerable size and value. The Prior thus held all, or nearly all, of the Town. Earl Roger exempted the homage and services of his chief tenants in the hamlets and parishes around the City, with their reliefs, eschaets, and duties, due in respect of the land held by them, together with all military services, within the realm belonging to the Manor of Coventry, and he reserved to his freeholders their rights and liberties in the woods, or Manor of Coventry, thus "saving the commoners the reasonable pasture for so many beasts with which they may conveniently plough and carry on their arable lands, and which by reason of those lands, as well of right, as of custom, they ought and were wont to have commons." De Montalt also retained Cheylesmore (situate southward), with its house and park, which he held "of the honour of Chester by Knights service," together with certain other property, including the Monastery of the Grey Friars, and the Leper Hospital at Sponne.

King Henry III., in 1266-7, granted the Prior and his House freedom from suit to the County or Hundredth Court of Warwickshire, and to the Sheriff's turn. They thus obtained a further privilege. He appointed a Coroner within the Town of Coventry, who should answer before the Justices Itinerant for all things concerning his office. In the same year he granted them a Guild Merchant, with the privileges thereto belonging, and thus licenced a company of buyers and sellers who, beforetime, had apparently traded on sufferance alone, this grant being probably but the confirmation of what already existed, but which, through local circumstances, required resuscitation or amendment.

The Town increased with the establishment of the Monastery. From a purely rural community in Saxon days, it had by the time of Edward I. grown into a mixed commercial and agricultural City. The earliest merchants and tradesmen either sold various articles of daily consumption, wove rude cloth, or collected the wool and other materials for manufacture, selling their produce at home, and conveying their wares to the markets of adjacent towns and villages. Under the Church's patronage, trade became established, and as the demand sprang up, markets and fairs were more firmly held under Charters. The Prior had a weekly market in his part of the Town, and in 1203 paid a fine of five marks for its alteration. In 1217 Earl Ranulph obtained for his burgesses a yearly eight days' fair to be held at the feast of Holy Trinity, whilst the Prior had a Royal grant for a like fair commencing on the second of October annually. With advancing years trades became more in number and merchants increased. Not only were there tradesmen born within the City, but some came from a distance, both obtaining a holding under the lords of the place. The Norman rule reduced the

inhabitants, whether born within the Town, or the denized strangers, into liege subjects, amenable to their lords. They became burghers, and renting a house at a certain yearly rental, were subject to socage and burgage tenure, contributing their services as townsmen to watch and ward, and other imposts, tallages, and payments, whether local or otherwise. Thus arose "the burgesses" of the Borough (first so named in a Charter granted about 1180). They had their chartered rights, purchased by themselves, whereby their holdings were held to them, as Earl Ranulph in his grant expresses it, "well and honorably quietly and in free-burgage, held of me and my heirs, as they, in the time of my father, and others of my ancestors have held better more firmly and more freely," at which time the customs, immunities and privileges of the Town, already acknowledged by their antiquity, became confirmed by grant. Their Portmanmote, or Town Court, was granted in the time of Henry II., by the same Earl, and witnessed by Roger, constable of Chester, Robert de Montalt, steward (of Coventry), Ralph Meisnilwarin (parson of St. Michael's, Coventry), and others. It was confirmed to them by Royal Charter, witnessed by Ralph de Glanvill, the great Judge, and Sheriff of Warwickshire, and by other Lords. In this Court all pleas belonging to the Earl or his burgesses could be inquired into by a Justice appointed by themselves, but acting for the Earl, whilst the townsmen were not to be drawn into his Castle, by any of his Constables, to plead for any cause whatever. They had the laws, usages and customs which the burgesses of Lincoln enjoyed. Their holdings and dwellings were small, but proportionate to their requirements, whilst they had rights of common pasture over certain lands, and the liberties which they enjoyed in the woods and Manor.

The Town was partially paved in 1285, but this was not completed until some years after. About the year 1290, Bailiffs were appointed to rule "the tried and trusty men" of the place, for which right the burgesses no doubt paid.

Magna Carta, wrested from King John in 1215, granted very important liberties and privileges to all orders of men in the kingdom, and the name of William, Bishop of Coventry, appears therein. The great Barons alone sat in the early Parliaments, or Common Councils, to assess aids and scutages; but in latter feudal times the system of representation by King and Lords gave way, and drifted into more equal paths. *Magna Carta*, whilst it gave the towns their liberties and free customs as beforetime, ordered the tenants in chief to be summoned by the Sheriffs or Bailiffs. At first the counties sent representatives to deliberate with the Lords, when, apparently, the chief free-burgesses of Warwick and Coventry chose conjointly with the freeholders of the County of Warwick, the Knights of the Shire, who were returned. Afterwards, the burgesses of towns, rising into power and becoming of sufficient importance, sent their own representatives to Parliament. King Henry the Third ratified King John's great Charter of liberties, and in 1218 various cities and boroughs are said to have been called upon to elect deputies to represent them in the Parliament, held at London after

Michaelmas ; but playing false and ruled by aliens, the King annulled the rights of the Barons, Church, and people.

Wherever the rights of election was thus early by burgage tenure (as appears originally to have been at Coventry), it was always considered in law to be a proof of the great antiquity of the Town. Each burgess or inhabitant within the Borough held one undivided tenement at a certain rental. Their circumstances in life were sufficiently independent to enable them to pay scot and lot (taxes levied for State purposes, with the due proportionate assessment thereof), together with all such other local and national burdens and imposts as they were liable to be called upon for the nation's safety and the King's needs, which those of Coventry paid from time to time. They had the right of voting given them, incident to their holdings, for the election of their chief burgesses to Parliament, in order to see the granting and disposal of the taxes.

As has been said, in early Parliaments the freeholders of towns were few in number, and were probably joined with those of the counties in the choice of members, but as the importance of the boroughs increased, and the burgesses rose into power, it became necessary to give them separate representation. During the great disturbances of the Barons' wars, in December, 1264, when King Henry III. was the prisoner of Simon de Montfort, that Earl (then owner of the Castle of Kenilworth), not only sent writs to the nobles to attend a Parliament, but issued them "to the Sheriffs, and to the cities of London, York, and Lincoln, and the boroughs of England," to send representatives to an Assembly at London, to meet 20th of January, 1265, which may have been the first complete Parliament of Knights, Citizens, and Burgesses. The returns, however, are lost, and it is not known whether Coventry sent representatives, but the Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, and the Prior of St. Mary's, in the Town, were summoned with the greater Barons. In 1267, the Churchmen at Coventry were loyal to the King, both Town and Monastery had suffered from the plunder of the rebel forces in their marauding sorties, whilst holding Kenilworth and its Castle. During the siege thereof, after the Battle of Evesham and De Montfort's death, a Committee of Royalists assembled at the Coventry Priory, in October, 1267, where a compromise was effected, and the Baronial party, who had been disinherited, were allowed to regain their lands upon a stipulated payment or fine. Although this decree was formulated at Coventry, it was known as "the dictum of Kenilworth," from being first proclaimed there. Roger de Montalt, of "Mold and Castle Rising castles," figures amongst the insurgent Barons of the time.

The known commencement of direct representation at Coventry dates from 1295, in which year the Town sent two Burgesses to Parliament. The writ, which was addressed to the Sheriff of Warwickshire, translated, read as follows :—

"The King to the Sheriff of Warwickshire greeting :—Because we desire to have a conference and treaty with the Earls, Barons, and other great men of our Kingdom to provide remedies

against the dangers with which the same Kingdom is threatened at this time. We, therefore, have commanded them, that they be at Westminster on the next Sunday after the feast of St. Martin in winter next coming, to treat, ordain, and to do such things as those dangers may be prevented. We command and firmly enjoin thee, that without delay thou dost cause to be chosen, and to come unto us at the time and place aforesaid, two Knights of the County aforesaid, and of every City two Citizens, and of every Borough two Burgesses, of the most discrete and fit for business, so that the said Knights may have sufficient power for themselves and for the Community of the County aforesaid, and the said Citizens and Burgesses may have the same power separately for them, for themselves, and the Communities of the Cities and Boroughs, then to do in the premises what shall be ordained in common, or by Common Council, so that for defect of such power the aforesaid business may not remain undone, and have there the names of the Knights, Citizens, and Burgesses, and this writ.

"Witness, the King at Canterbury, the third of October."

The Sheriff, William de Castello, had formerly represented the County of Warwick as a Knight of the Shire, and finding that in addition to the two Knights for the County beforetime returned, two Burgesses were required for each of the Boroughs of Coventry and Warwick, he forthwith intimated the purport of the summons to both the County and towns. Naturally, the first Parliamentary Burgesses were selected from amongst the most prominent inhabitants, and such as had been either Bailiffs or Justices, the Sheriff taking care that none but loyal and approved men were chosen. The free-burgesses of Coventry would meet late in October in their Town Court, with their Bailiff or Justice presiding, when the writ being read, the proceedings were taken for the election. The French King having laid siege to Guienne, in Normandy, had landed a force at Dover, and wrought damage. The Crown wanted money to carry on French and Scottish wars, and to withstand invasion. It was no pleasant thing to elect Burgesses, or to be chosen; for taxation was the result, and there were doubtless misgivings amongst the townsfolk as to the amount to be exacted, chargeable upon their moveables. They chose for their representative Burgesses in Parliament

AUNKETIL DE COLESHULL AND RICHARD DE WESTON,

two prominent townsmen. De Coleshull had been Bailiff, and served the office of Coroner in 1309. He witnessed a deed still in the Muniment Room, St. Mary's Hall, Coventry, wherein Alice, daughter of Benedict le Cotiler, of Coventry, granted property in Great Park Street to John de Ryton. The other member, Richard de Weston, was a merchant, who had been Bailiff. Both he and his wife were buried in the Church of the Grey Friars. The writ being returned, the members chosen journeyed to Westminster to serve their fellow burgesses and fulfil the King's bidding.

Parliament granted the King a considerable sum, the Earls, Barons, and Knights gave an eleventh part of their moveables; the Cities, Boroughs, and King's tenants a seventh, and the Clergy a tenth, after which the members returned home to hasten the collection of the aid, and to settle the grumbling caused by taxation.

CHAPTER III.

EDWARDIAN BURGESSES.

From Edward I. (1296) to Edward II. (1327).

Popular representation — Misunderstood — Consequences — Payments to Members — Annual Parliaments—Coventry omits to send Members—Robert Russel and Robert Kelle returned—Thomas Ballard and Laurence Schepey—Ralph Tewe and John Russell—Henry Bagot and Peter Baron—Alexander de Moubray and Henry Bagot—Alexander de Moubray again, with Henry Bury—Richard le Spicer and John de Langele—Account of the above Burgesses—Coventry “Borough”—Richard le Spicer and John de Langele again sent—No returns made—Probable reason thereof.



ING EDWARD'S regard for the principle, “that what concerned all should be approved by all,” was neither understood nor appreciated at this early period. No intelligence could be more disagreeable to a borough than to find it had to choose Burgesses, and various places petitioned to be excused. Members were taken away from their callings, and little honour was gained by the service. If, during Parliament, representatives absented themselves without leave, they were liable to fine or punishment. It is true they received their expenses whilst attending, which, in the time of Edward I., was, for a Knight of the Shire, four shillings per day ; or for a Citizen or Burgess, two shillings, which was considered as lodging money and service fee, whilst in some cases horses and attendants accompanied the representatives, whose costs were usually allowed also, yet it was very distasteful. These charges falling on the boroughs, coupled with the fact that each assembling of Parliament usually meant the levying of fresh aids and subsidies upon a struggling people, caused ill-feeling, and Coventry, with other towns, often omitted to send representatives, whereupon sureties for attendance were called for.

In neither the Parliament at Bury in 1296, nor that in London in 1297, did the Town return members, but in 1298 a writ was again addressed to the Sheriff of Warwickshire, and the Burgesses sent to the Parliament at York in May that year were well-known merchants,

ROBERT RUSSEL AND ROBERT KELLE.

They are especially described as of “Coventr’” in the return, to distinguish them from the Knights for the County of Warwick.

The Town missed 1299, but again sent to the Parliament summoned at Lincoln upon January 20, 1301, when

THOMAS BALLARD AND LAURENCE DE SCHEPEY

were returned. Thomas Ballard witnessed a deed of John Pat, of Coventry, and Alice, his wife, wherein they grant a messuage with appurtenances in Earl Street, formerly held by Robert Ballard, which deed was granted to "William Schepeye, merchant of Coventre," in 1295. Schepey was an old Coventry name, and, like all early surnames, written various ways.

Next year a Parliament was summoned to meet in London, in September, 1302, but was prorogued to Westminster on the 14th October following, to which

RALPH TEWE AND JOHN RUSSELL

were chosen. Ralph Tewe was a merchant in the City, and in the MSS. belonging to the Coventry Corporation is a deed of his granting a messuage in Little Park Street, formerly held by Hugh le Tayllour, to Peter de Welynton, dated 1310. The seal used by Tewe was a cross, the four ends of which terminated in foliated crosslets, surmounted by a triangle reversed, it bore for its motto, "Crede Michi." He was also a witness to the before-mentioned grant of Alice Todenham. John Russell had served the office of Justice.

A Parliament was summoned to meet at Westminster, 16th February, 1304, and the Burgesses sent were

HENRY BAGOT AND PETER BARON.

Both were well-known names. Amongst the local muniments is a deed dated 1309, conveying a messuage in Coventry from John, son of John Bolyngre, to "Peter Barun of Coventr."

To the Parliament at Westminster, in 1306,

ALEXANDER DE MOUBRAY AND HENRY BAGOT

were returned, whilst to that assembling at Carlisle in 1306 (the last Parliament of Edward I.), the representatives were

ALEXANDER DE MOUBRAY AND HENRY BURY.

A break of some years occurs at this time in the representation of Coventry, which did not again return Burgesses until the eighth year of the reign of Edward II., but in 1313 a townsman of Warwick named Roger de Coventr' was returned for that borough. To the Westminster Parliament, 20th January, 1314,

RICHARD LE SPICER AND JOHN DE LANGELE

were the Coventry Burgesses chosen. Coventry was still entered as a "borough" in the returns, although there are fourteen cathedral towns termed "cities" in those for

this year, and it was not described as a City until 1472. The sister city of Lichfield (which first returned representatives in 1304) is also styled "borough" in the few early returns which it made, and having omitted to send for a long period until Edward VI., it is first called a "city" in the returns for 1552. Richard le Spicer was a merchant, who had a house in Broadgate, near which was a narrow lane called the "Spicerstoke," either named from his family, or from its being the location of the pepperers or grocers. John de Langele witnessed the before-mentioned grant of John Pat, and in a deed dated 1326-7, mention is made of "Henry de Langele, son of John de Langele, of Coventre." A family of this name had a fortified manor house at Pinley near the City, the site whereof still retains the name of "Castle Close." Undoubtedly some of the younger sons of the principal landowners near Coventry became members of the Monastery, whilst some joined the Guild, and became merchant traders; hence the occurrence of the Warwickshire family names of Bagot, Mowbray, and Langley, among those of Coventry Burgesses.

The returns for the Lincoln Parliament, meeting in 1315, are lost, but Dr. Thomas, in his continuation of Dugdale's "Warwickshire," gives the same representatives as before, namely,

RICHARD LE SPICER AND JOHN DE LANGELE.

The obit of Richard le Spicer was annually celebrated at Bablake Church upon the Feast of St. John the Baptist.

This year the Prior of Coventry and Robert de Montalt were certified as Lords of the place.

From 1315 (8th Edward II.) until 1346 (20th Edward III.) no Parliamentary returns for Coventry have been found, and apparently the burgesses were released from sending. Sir William Dugdale says that in 1341 "Coventry had not the reputation of being a City or Borough," because "it did not contribute more than one hundred marks to the King's taxes." The town suffered considerably in Edward II.'s reign, and the community, feeling pavage, pontage, and murage taxes pressing heavily, probably, like other places, petitioned, and were excused from sending.




CHAPTER IV.

CIVIC INCORPORATION AND IRREGULAR PARLIAMENTARY RETURNS.

Edward III. 1327 to 1377.

Cheylesmore the possession of Queen Isabel—Merchants and Guilds—King Edward's grants—Bablake Chapel—St. Mary's Hall—A Corporation formed—Its duties—Building the City walls—The White Friars—Backward Parliamentary representation—Townsmen sent, Andrew de Rydewar', John le Warde, Roger le Hunte, William Grauntpe, Jordan de Shepeye, and Roger le Bray—Account of them—Parliamentary Burgesses—John de Percy and Nicholas le Hunte—Nicholas Michel and Richard de Stoke—Their story—No direct representation for eighty-two Parliaments—Friends in Council—Abbots and Priors in Parliament—Death of Queen Isabel—Prince Edward grants the fee-farm to the Mayor and Bailiffs.

 ROBERT DE MONTALT and Emme, his wife, levied a fine of all their interest at Coventry, in 1327, by the name of "the Manor of Cheylesmore, with appurtenances, £96 6s. 8d. yearly rent, and the services of the Prior of Coventry." Entailing the same upon their heirs male; and for want of such issue, upon Isabel (the Queen mother) during her life; then to John of Eltham, Earl of Cornwall (her second son); and on failure of his issue, upon Edward III. (her eldest son) and his heirs. The estate passed to the Queen, but John of Eltham died in 1337 without issue, whereupon the King created his eldest son Edward, Duke of Cornwall, in October following, and by Charter invested him (*inter alia*) with the Manor of Cheylesmore, and interest at Coventry, "for the better support of his dignity," settling the reversion upon him and successive Dukes after the Queen's death, all which Isabel confirmed at Castle Rising in December. The Crown, and the Princes of Wales as Dukes of Cornwall, thus coming into direct communication with the Burgesses, often made the Royal influence felt in the Parliamentary representation in after times.

The Coventry merchants, banding together for mutual trade interests, were not slow to gain the favour of their new patrons. They desired their Guild to be placed upon sounder foundations, and wished for increased authority over the Town. About 1344 they paid a fine of ten marks for a Charter of ease, whereby they and their successors were made free from toll, pavage, pontage, and nurage, throughout the kingdom; and in 1340 King Edward licenced, to certain Coventry men, a Guild Merchant to be held in the Town. He shortly after sanctioned St. John Baptist Guild, to which Queen Isabel gave land on which to build a Chapel at Bablake, and the formation of

the Guilds of Holy Trinity and St. Catherine followed. These three last subsequently amalgamated, and met at St. Mary's Hall. The King also licenced the Corpus Christi Guild. Purchasing these rights, the merchants work centred around their Guilds, which became local constitutions of great worth to them, and in time St. Mary's Hall was used for Town purposes. With advancing years the Parliamentary Burgesses and Civic Authorities were chosen principally from amongst the members of the Guilds, and apprenticeship to the various trades was introduced.

King Edward, by Letters Patent, in January, 1345, constituted a Corporation at Coventry consisting of a Mayor and Bailiffs, to be chosen annually by the inhabitants, and consolidated a Municipal government, whose members taking the usual oath, were to perform the duties of the office, to hold pleas, to have a common seal—the Mayor, and a Clerk named by the King, to have recognizance of debts—and a prison, to be kept in the Queen's part for evil-doers taken there, whereof the Mayor and Bailiffs were to have custody.

The City walls were begun in 1355, and took nearly fifty years in erecting. They were built by Royal licence, and, including twelve gates, were 11,700 feet in circumference.

The Carmelites, or White Friars, gained a settlement in Coventry about 1342, when Sir John Poultney, Kt., four times Lord Mayor of London, aided their Monastery on the south-east of the Town, adjoining the way in from London. Their Church, built in the perpendicular style, was exceedingly beautiful.

Backward as the burgesses were at this time to send representatives to Parliament, they, nevertheless, with other boroughs, obeyed the Royal summons to send townsmen, at different times, to advise upon pressing trade matters. By writ dated at Northampton, 2nd December, 1327, addressed to the "Bailiffs of Coventre," one or more "discrete merchants" were summoned to attend at York on the 20th January following, touching business for the advantage of the wool merchants of the kingdom; when their choice fell upon

ANDREW DE RYDEWAR'.

In September, 1337, a Parliament met at Westminster, and writs were issued in August to the Mayors and Bailiffs of certain towns to send "three or four men" to the Parliament, who appear to have been additional to the chosen representatives. Coventry had not returned Burgesses, but then sent

JOHN LE WARDE, ROGER LE HUNTE, AND WILLIAM GRAUNTPÉ.

This John le Warde was the last Bailiff under the old, and first Mayor of the new, Incorporation of 1344-5, and was buried in the Grey Friars' Church. Roger le Hunte was one of the twelve burgesses who obtained Corporate rights for the Town. William Grauntpe and others had a suit with the Prior, who brought an action against them for

selling goods in the Earl's Street. Although they pleaded they did it under the Earl of Chester's Charter, the Prior obtained £60 damages, and they were ordered not to sell their goods on Friday, except in the Prior's part as before.

In 1338 King Edward directed the Sheriffs of Warwickshire, by writs of summons dated Ipswich, 16th July, to send two merchants to Parliament from each of his Bailiwicks, in addition to the regular return made, when

JORDAN DE SHEPEYE AND ROGER LE BRAY

were returned.

Jordan de Shepeye, in 1346, was the second Mayor of Coventry. He built Jordan Well, is said to have founded the Shepey Chantry in St. Michael's, and gave a fine to the King for licence to grant a house in Coventry to that Church, so that Mass might be said for his soul, and for those of all the faithful. Roger le Bray made a grant to William de Leycestre, merchant, of a messuage in Great Park Street, the witnesses being John de Clyfton, Bailiff (1323-24), William, son of William G'u'pe (Grauntpe), and Roger le Hunt; the seal affixed in the deed is an oval one, the device a merchant's mark between the initial R. B., and the legend, "Sigill Rogerii de Bray." He and his wife Emma were buried in the Church of the Grey Friars.

Reverting again to the regular returns of the Burgesses chosen for Parliament,

JOHN DE PERCY AND NICHOLAS LE HUNT

were sent from Coventry, to the Westminster Parliament, 11th September, 1346. John de Percy, who was Mayor in 1373, was one of six Justices appointed to keep the peace of the Town, and he was a founder of Trinity Guild. He was a busy Citizen, and his name appears in several of the Corporation Muniments. The anniversary of his death, and that of his wife Alice, was celebrated in the White Friars' Church, towards the building of which he gave a donation. Nicholas le Hunt was a Bailiff and merchant of the City, whose ancestors had been established in Coventry some years.

The writs for this Parliament were addressed to the Sheriff of Warwickshire and Leicestershire, and his return thereto of John de Percy was "manucaptured" by Nicholas Percy and others, burgesses of the Borough.

For six years the Town sent no representatives, but it must be remarked that the returns of the boroughs are scanty. On 23rd September, 1353, a Parliament was summoned to meet at Westminster, when the Sheriff by the writ was directed, amidst other things, to send "the Mayors and Bailiffs of certain places, or two Citizens or Burgesses," when

NICHOLAS MICHEL AND RICHARD DE STOKE

were returned. The latter was the Mayor for the year, and the former Bailiff. Nicholas Michel, or Mitchel, was Mayor in 1349, 1356, 1362, and 1368. Possessed of wealth, he was one of the twelve persons who purchased the Incorporation; his family was

closely allied by marriage to the Botoners, who rebuilt and enlarged the Parish Church of St. Michael, and in 1366 he acted as a Commissioner for the levying and collecting the dues, then raised, for building the walls of the City. Richard de Stoke came of an ancient Warwickshire family, settling at Stoke, a neighbouring parish to Coventry. He served the office of Mayor not only this year, but likewise in 1355, 1357, 1361, and 1367. He was a founder of St. John's Guild, and, with others, had a Royal licence to grant lands at Southam, Clifton, and Coventry, to the Prior of St. Mary's at Coventry. He was a member of the Mural Commission, and laid the first stone of the Town wall at New Gate, near the White Friars' Monastery. In 1362 Richard de Stoke, as Steward of Cheylesmore Manor, and at the order of Prince Edward, enclosed the park with pailing. He was a most popular citizen, and "obtained the good strikes," *i.e.*, just or standard measures. The anniversary of his death was kept on the Eve of St. Thomas of Canterbury.

Coventry sent no Burgesses to the eighty-two Parliaments from (28 Edward III.) 1354 to (31 Henry VI.) 1452, and the reason thereof is not clear. It has been surmised that the Borough was disfranchised during the period of nearly one hundred years, but this is improbable, as the Town was in high favour with the Crown, and no act of disloyalty of the burgesses is known to have occasioned it. The wealth of the place was increasing, but the wall levies and other taxes were large, and representation was felt to be a burden. It is therefore probable that the townsmen, whilst paying the subsidies required from time to time, were excused returning, and thereby saved their Burgesses expenses. The choice of what boroughs in a County should make return was left in a great measure in the Sheriff's hands until the time of Edward IV. If any town complained of representation as a hardship, it could be exempted by Royal favour, and Coventry appears to have participated in the King's licence, and been excused, as were certain other boroughs. If not sending Burgesses during so long a period, the townsmen had friends in the Knights of the Shire, the foremost of whom were William Bagot, of Baginton Castle (1387 to 1399), Guy Spynne, the King's Escheator (1387 to 1391), and Robert de Castello, of Withybrooke (1414). They also had the Princes of Wales, Bishops of the Diocese, and Priors of Coventry, as patrons. Of the last, Fuller says, not only that their attendances with the Lords were irregular, but that "they played at in and out, and often declined appearance there."

A list of the Abbots and Priors of Coventry sitting in the Parliaments to 1539, taken from an ancient record, is here given :—

Leofwine, 1st Abbot, 1043 to 1053.

Leofric, 2nd Abbot, 1053 to 1066.

Lewin, or Leofwin, 3rd Abbot, 1066, died 1095.

Burwyng, 1st Prior.

Herwey, 2nd Prior.

Leosstan, 3rd Prior.

Owyne, 4th Prior.

Stanulph, 5th Prior.

Richard, 6th Prior.

Laurence, 7th Prior, 1149 to 1179.

Moses, 8th Prior, elected 1183, died in 1198.

Joybert, 9th Prior, 1198, died 1216.

Geofrey, 10th Prior, 1216, died about 1235.

Roger de Watton, 11th Prior, 1235 to 1248.

William de Brightwalton, 12th Prior, 1248 to 1279.

Thomas de Pavy, 13th Prior, 1279.

Henry de Leycestre, 14th Prior, 1292 to 1321.

William de Irreys, 15th Prior, 1322 to 1349.

William de Dunstable, 16th Prior, 1349.

William de Greneburgh, 17th Prior, July, 1361.

James de Horton, 18th Prior, 1390.

Roger Coton, 19th Prior, 1396.

Richard Crosby, 20th Prior, May, 1399.

Richard Nottingham, 21st Prior, May, 1437, to March, 1453.

John Shotteswell, 22nd Prior, 1453, died 1460.

Thomas Deram, 23rd Prior, 1460, died April, 1481.

Richard Shaw, 24th Prior, 1481 to 1489.

William Pollesworth, 25th Prior, 1490 to 1500 (at least).

John Impyngton, 26th Prior, 1510 to his death.

John Webb, 27th Prior, 1517 to 1528.

Thomas Wyfford, 28th Prior, 1528 to 1538.

Thomas Camswell, 29th Prior, 1538 to surrender of the Priory, 15th January, 1539.

Queen Isabel died in 1358, when Cheylesmore Manor came to Edward the Black Prince, who by his Letters Patent, in 1364, granted his interests at Coventry to "the Mayor, Bailiffs, and Commonalty," to hold in fee-farm, and, like his father, he gave them and their heirs liberty to enclose "the City with a wall of stone and lime embattled." He died in 1376, and his son, Prince Richard, was created Prince of Wales shortly before King Edward's death.



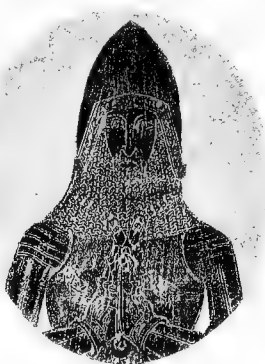
THOMAS ARUNDEL,
Archbishop of Canterbury,
Defended the Church in the Coventry
Parliament, 1404.



WILLIAM WAYNFLEET,
Bishop of Winchester,
Opened the Coventry Parliament, 1459.



RICHARD NEVILL,
Earl of Warwick,
Defended Coventry, 1471.



SIR WILLIAM BAGOT, KNT.,
Steward of Cheylesmore,
Died, 1407.



SIR THOMAS LYTTELTON, KNT.,
Recorder of Coventry,
1450.



HENRY BEAUFORT,
Bishop of Lincoln,
Opened the Coventry Parliament, 1404.



RICHARD CROSBY,
Prior of Coventry,
1423.

CHAPTER V.

REPRESENTATION OMITTED: A COVENTRY PARLIAMENT.

From Richard II. (1377) to Henry V. (1422).

King Richard's early Charter—Justices—The Civic Sword—The Town disgraced—Further Charters—The Walls—Tenths and Fifteenths—Collection thereof excused—Charter of Improvement—Waste Lands—Recorder appointed—Thomas Purefoy—The Guilds—The Botoners—Cheylesmore Tenants—Carthusian Monastery founded—Combat of Hereford and Norfolk—Sir William Bagot—Revolution and deposition of Richard—Henry IV.—The Lack-learning Parliament at Coventry—Account thereof—Prince Henry arrested—Ascends Throne—Grants for no new Guild—Leet Book—Town and Merchants.

RICHARD, son of Edward the Black Prince, was crowned 16th July, 1377; and being but eleven years old, a Council was appointed to govern during his minority. Although Coventry had a population of 7,000, it sent no Burgesses to Parliament during his reign, and there being no Prince of Wales, Cheylesmore remained in the hands of the Crown. The Royal influence now exceeded that of the Prior, and aided the burgesses in numerous ways. In his first year, the King confirmed the privileges granted by his ancestors to Coventry, and made additions thereto. He granted the Mayor, Bailiffs, and Commonalty, freedom from murage in the town and county of Chester and elsewhere in the realm, "for all things and merchandise whatsoever." By other Letters, he instituted six Justices for the keeping of the peace within the Town, with power to hear and determine felony and trespass.

In 1384 the King ordered the Civic Sword to be carried after the Mayor. At this time the Barons of Exchequer distrained the Mayor and others who had held that office, because they had not taken oath before them. Richard, in 1387, by Letters Patent, pardoned them, and granted that each succeeding Mayor of Coventry, when elected to the office, should take the accustomed oath before the Coroner in the presence of the Commonalty in the Town only, and they were excused from thenceforth from appearing before the Barons of the Exchequer to take such oath. In 1388 the sword was again carried before the Mayor.

Before, and when, the King reached his majority, he gave further Charters to his Coventry men. In 1385 he ratified his grandfather's licence for building the Town walls, and granted the privilege of obtaining stone from the quarries near Cheylesmore to build them, and also for erecting the great gate adjoining the Grey Friars' Monastery,

whilst in 1391 he allowed stone to build Spon Gate. To the support and cost of the works, in 1385, he gave his ferm of sealing woollen cloths at Coventry for five years, valued at £24 sterling.

The Mayor and Bailiffs, in 1387, petitioned the King to relieve them, "The tenants and residents in the Town," from paying fifteenths, "and being daily disquieted and vexed for yt, they have hitherto been burdened of all manner of fifteenths, tenths, taxations and other tallages, and helps out of the Town granted to us by ye Commonalty of the realm of England," and he ordered that those who had dwelt in the City for the most part of the year should not be charged from henceforth for the collection and gathering, and freed them thereof. Tenths and fifteenths granted by Parliament were charged upon goods and chattels rather than land, especially in the cities. They were taxes of money on the boroughs, and so called because they amounted to a tenth or fifteenth part of that which the City or Town had been of old valued at. Subsidies were raised upon each particular man's goods, or lands, and were uncertain in amount, because the estate of every individual was uncertain.

In 1398 Richard, with the assent of his Council, granted the Mayor, Bailiffs, etc., that they and their successors might make improvement and commodity of all the gates, walls and bridges about the Town, and of whatsoever purprestures as well in lands as waters, and also all the waste land within certain limits chiefly southward of Coventry, which he gave towards the repairs of the walls, and payment of the fee-ferm, and other charges, sending writs to Sir William Bagot, his Steward at Cheylesmore, for the due effecting thereof. He further gave the Mayor, Recorder, and four substantial inhabitants, power to hear and determine all causes and complaints touching labourers and artificers, and he ordained that the Justices within the County of Warwick should not intermeddle in the Town or suburbs thereof. The office of Recorder had apparently been granted before time. Its duties required considerable legal learning, and the person appointed, usually "a skilfull and virtuous apprentice at law," was required to assist the Mayor on the recording of pleas and the delivery of judgments, as also eloquently set forth all matters relating to the City before the King, his Courts, or Council. In a letter to the Mayor of Coventry, Henry VII. considered the office "one of the most honor and substance in the realm." Chosen by the governing body, the fee for services occasionally varied, whilst in time the appointment became subject to considerable party bias, as will be seen. The earliest known Recorder of Coventry, Thomas Purefoy, was a member of a family, which in the late reign, came from Flanders to England, and settled down as wool merchants at Fenny Drayton, near Atherstone. Purefoy, adopting the law, soon distinguished himself. He died in 1399, and was buried in Fenny Drayton Church, where his tomb was despoiled at the Reformation.

During the period embraced by this Chapter the Town grew, in spite of the

plague and wars, its increase being extended in some measure by the security afforded in the walls with which it was being surrounded. The Guilds, more firmly established, bound their members closely together for mutual aid, the members elected a master, clerk, and other officers, attended to business regulations, buried their dead, and did various acts of charity, whilst numerous chantries in the Cathedral and Churches of the Town were the work of their members. The Shereman and Taylors' Guild was founded about 1380.

The Botoners completed the rebuilding of St. Michael's Church about 1395; and one of them, when Mayor in 1406, caused the streets to be paved; at which time the large Hall known as St. Mary's was also building. In 1388 part of the Park adjoining the Town at Cheylesmore became built upon, and a tenantry made to Cheylesmore Manor. Three years before King Richard laid the foundation stone of the Carthusian Monastery of St. Ann, without the walls, near the London Road. The Priory buildings and Cathedral were enlarged, and the White Friars' Convent was in erection.

In the Shrewsbury Parliament of 1398, the Duke of Hereford accused the Duke of Norfolk with having slandered the King whilst travelling with him between Brainford and London. The matter was finally ordered by the King and Commissioners to be settled according to the laws of chivalry, by single combat, at Coventry, on the 16th of September. When the combatants met at Kingfield, Gosford Green, and were on the point of encountering: the King stayed the fight; and after consulting with his Council, banished the Dukes from the realm; Norfolk for life, and Hereford for ten years. Discontent with Richard's Government was, however, felt on all sides. Shakespeare well shows Hereford's popularity with the people, in the King's speech with Bagot and others (*Richard I.*, Act i. Scene 4), and Holinshead tells how "the people ran after him in everie towne and street where he came, before he took to sea, lamenting his departure," as their "only shield, defence, and comfort of the Commonwealth." The death of John, Duke of Lancaster, the King's uncle, and father of Hereford, in 1399, caused King Richard to take steps to prevent the return of the banished Duke, but he was forced to proceed to Ireland. Hereford hastened from France, and, landing in Yorkshire, was joined by numerous northern Lords with an army of 60,000 men, when he boldly asserted his right to the Crown. The Warwickshire knight, Sir William Bagot, remained faithful to the King, and returned back speedily to England. Richard, however, retired to Conway Castle, and was subsequently conducted towards London. At Lichfield his attempted escape was frustrated; he was removed to Coventry, up to which point the Welsh harassed his captors. From Coventry he was taken to the Tower of London, and the Parliament, which met in October, 1399, deposed him, and made Henry king instead: whose eldest son, Henry, was created Prince of Wales, and Duke of Cornwall; whereupon Cheylesmore came into his ownership. What part Coventry took in this revolution is unknown. Sir William

Bagot was imprisoned in the Tower of London, and his Castle at Baginton delivered over to the Sheriff of Warwickshire, and the Bishop of St. David's. Being popular with the Commons, they petitioned for his release and restitution; and King Henry, remembering Bagot's services, when he stayed at the Castle on the encounter at Coventry, pardoned him. Bagot died in 1407, and a brass in Baginton Church shows him in the Lancasterian collar of S.S.

Still the Town did not send members, though Henry IV. summoned a Parliament to meet at Coventry on the 3rd September, 1403, but, through the nearness of Christmas, prorogued it to Westminster for the 14th January following. The King called another to meet at Coventry on the 6th October, 1404, by writs dated at Lichfield 25th August. The Commons consisted of 83 members only, 71 of whom were Knights, and 12 Burgesses. The Court had tampered with the elections, and the members returned were unfavourable to the Church. The King directed the Sheriffs "to choose none that were in any way learned in the laws of the land, but only those who were wholly ignorant of either common or civil law." Stowe, and Speed, called this Assembly "the Laymen's Parliament," but the clerical writers of the time dubbed it "*Parliamentum Indoctorum*," the illiterate, or lack-learning Parliament; "not that it contained more blockheads than Parliaments usually do," says Pennant, "but from its hatred of the clergy, whose revenues it was determined not to spare." The Coventry burgesses sent no members, but the Prior and Bishop were present amongst the Barons.

The Lords met in the Great Chamber of the Priory, and the Commons in the Chapter House, where also sat "the tryers" of petitions, both places being newly "appointed and ornamented for the purpose." The Lord Chancellor, Henry Beaufort, Bishop of Lincoln, the King's brother, declared the cause of summons, and taking for his text, "*Rex vocavit seniores terræ*," learnedly argued "that for the safety of the realm, both within and without, and particularly for repressing the Welsh rebels; and for resisting their enemies in France and Brittany, who were daily getting reinforcements in order to invade the nation, and to subvert the State; for the due observation of the peace and the administration of justice, the King had called the wise men of the realm to be by them advised for the best."

An extraordinary aid was required to subdue the Welsh and repel the French, and the Chancellor finally urged the Commons to choose a Speaker, and grant it. Whereupon they retired to their Chamber, and the next day selected the Devonshire knight, Sir William Sturme, who was presented to the King, and accepted. It was not long before a scene occurred, for the Commons soon openly remonstrated with the King, declaring "that without burdening his people he might supply his occasions by seizing the revenue of the clergy," and they argued that as the Churchmen possessed "a third of the riches of the realm, and were not doing the King any personal service, it was but just they should contribute of their revenues towards the pressing needs of

the State." Besides, said they, "the riches of the Ecclesiastics make them negligent of duty, and the lessening of their excessive incomes would be of double advantage both to Church and State." The King was evidently favourable to their demand, but Thomas Arundel, Archbishop of Canterbury, could not let his own or the clergy's interest go undefended, and he boldly asserted "that though the Churchmen did not serve the King in person, it could not be inferred they were unserviceable, since they sent their vassals and tenants to accompany him on the field whenever there was occasion. To strip the clergy of their estates would put a stop to the prayers of the Church, given night and day for the State's welfare, whilst there was no expecting Divine protection if their prayers were so little valued." Whereat the Speaker of the Commons grimly smiled, and said "that to him the prayers of the Church seemed a very slender supply." The Archbishop retorted that if those prayers were so slighted, and other considerations incapable of suppressing plots against the clergy, it would be difficult to deprive them of their estates without exposing the kingdom to danger, and that so long as he was Archbishop he would oppose the injustice to the utmost of his power; then suddenly falling upon his knees, he appealed to the King's conscience, and "endeavoured to make him sensible that of all the crimes a Prince could commit, none was so heinous as the invasion of the Church's patrimony."

Henry, moved by Arundel's pleading, and seeing strong opposition ahead to this means of raising money, changed his purpose, and answered "that he blamed not the Archbishop's zeal, although his fears were groundless, for when he mounted the throne he firmly resolved to support the Church in all ways, and hoped to leave it in a better state than he found it." The Archbishop, who was no friend to the people, being thus encouraged, next addressed the Commons in a manner little calculated to win their regard. Imputing irreligion and avarice as the cause of their demand, he asserted "that you, and such as you, have advised the King and his predecessors to confiscate the goods and lands of the Alien Priories and Religious Houses, pretending great gain to him thereby—and indeed they were worth many thousands—yet the King is not half a mark the richer for them all, for you have extorted them, or begged them from him, and have appropriated their goods to your own uses! So conjecture has it, that your request for our temporalities arises not so much from the King's profit as from your own covetousness! Without doubt, should the King, as God forbid, fulfil your wicked purpose, he will not be a single farthing richer at the year's end; and truly, I would sooner have my head cut off than that the Church should be deprived of its least right."

The Commons made no reply, but retired to their own Chamber, and resolved to persist with their petition. They brought in a bill to seize the clerical revenues, but the Archbishop, Bishops, and Abbots were so solicitous that the Lords threw it out, whereupon other means were found of granting supply in "two tenths and two fifteenths, with a subsidy on wools, woolfells, and skins also; that is, of every denizen

for each sack of wool 43s. 4d. ; for every 240 woolfells the like sum, and for every last of skins £5 ; of aliens 10s. more, to subsist for two years ; three shillings on every tun of wine imported or exported, and 12 pence in the pound on merchandise." Such to be used for the defence of the Realm and the maintenance of the wars only.

Other matters of moment were considered and acted upon ; as the rescue of the Lord of Cardiff, who was besieged in his Castle by the Welsh, and the advancement of the King's younger sons, whilst many curious petitions and answers are recorded ; but at length, after sitting for nearly a month, the Parliament came to an end by reason of " victuals growing scarce and lodgings scanty," and Chancellor Beaufort, returning the King's thanks for attendance, dissolved it.

A Parliament was again called to assemble at Coventry upon the 15th February, 1406, but the King acting upon the advice of his Council, the place of meeting was changed to Gloucester, and the assembly was afterwards prorogued to Westminster.

In 1411 the Mayor, John Horneby, is said to have arrested Henry Prince of Wales at the Coventry Priory. Henry the Fourth died 20th March, 1413, and his son succeeded as Henry V.

The Guilds were now aristocratic institutions, and in 1413 the King granted a Patent whereby there should in the future be no new Guild formed in the City, whilst in 1417 he licensed the Corporation to hold lands in Mortmain. The next year the City Leet Book was commenced. " Coventry," says Dugdale, " had now grown to such a height of splendour by those strong and high walls, with so many beautiful gates and stately turrets, and other eminent buildings, as also by the privileges and liberties granted by so many Kings, and now of late honoured with the King's presence in the Parliament there held, raised no little joy in the hearts of its worthy merchants," " who, being no niggards of their riches, to further promote the City's glory, gave many tenements and lands towards the support and charges of the repairs to the walls, towers, gates, and fosses."

From the thirteenth century upwards the townsmen of Coventry had considerable dealings with those at London, Bristol, Leicester, and elsewhere ; some had undoubtedly houses in various towns, and became denized, others had connections in trade with members of their family settling in one or other places. The lists of Mayors and Sheriffs of London and of Coventry contain similar names, as Russel and Michael, and undoubtedly the families of Michael and Coventre migrated to the larger city. Such names as Hunt, Spicer, Saunders, Shipway, Botoner, and Norton occur in the lists of chief citizens of Bristol and Coventry. William Wyrcestre, a Bristol merchant of repute, who wrote several works of considerable merit, preferred to be called by the name of Botoner, after his mother's family, who were amongst the wealthiest of Coventry's citizens. The Spicers were early Mayors of Coventry and Bristol, whilst the Nortons rose to considerable position in both places.

CHAPTER VI.

DIRECT REPRESENTATION REGAINED: A SECOND PARLIAMENT AT COVENTRY.

Henry VI. (1422 to 1461).

The Townsmen and Knights' expenses—Chamberlains and Wardens—The Guilds and Companies—Their purposes and works—Masters and Apprentices—Origin of the Freemen—Riots—An illegal Guild suppressed—Charter of Inquisition—A Royal visit—An important Charter—Increased Municipal liberties—Formation of the County of the City of Coventry—Bailiffs made Sheriffs—Recorder Lyttelton—Representation regained—William Elton chosen—Disturbances—Coventry's connection with the Wars of the Roses—The Diabolical Parliament at Coventry—Its proceedings—Attainder of Yorkists—Its acts annulled.



THE first Parliament of Henry VI. appointed Governors during the King's minority. Coventry, although paying its proportion of taxes, returned no Burgesses during the early part of his reign. It, however, contributed to the expenses of the Knights of the Shire for the County of Warwick, and probably shared its representation, as a minute in the Leet Book for 1425 reads thus: "To have in mind; that on the Vigil of the Nativity of Our Lady; that the persons there present, that is to say (about 60 names follow), have ordered that the Knights' expenses for the year shall be paid by the Wardens of the City, and not by the Chamberlains. Also they ordain that the said Knights' expenses, the £10 which the Mayor hath yearly, and the fee of the cloak, shall hereafter be paid by the Wardens, and not by the Chamberlains." The Wardens' duty included the management of the City walls, and they collected the taxes for maintaining them, whilst the Chamberlains looked after the common and lammas lands, and collected the cattle dues. The Knights of the Shire of Warwick for 1426 were William Bysshoppeston and Thomas Burdett.

In the fourteenth century the Guild Merchant and Corporation were drifting to amalgamation, and through political changes, in that and the next century, the Civic Government passed more or less from the burgesses at large into a somewhat select body. Before the sixteenth century the Craft Guilds or Companies had won their way to a share in Municipal life. From 1487 upwards the list of Coventry Mayors gives the name of their Company. In the middle of the fifteenth century there were the following trades at Coventry:—Sheremen and Taylors, Drapers, Weavers, Smiths, Wire drawers, Corvysers, Mercers, Dyers, Walkers (or Fullers), Butchers, Girdlers, Whittawers, Wrights, Bakers, Barbers, Fishmongers, Tylers, Skinners, Barkers, Saddlers,

Cardmakers, Masons, and Cooks; to which in time were added; Fellmongers, Feltmakers, Coopers, Shoemakers, Tanners, Clothiers, and Carpenters.

These Companies were originally instituted for trade purposes, and Charters granted to them by various Monarchs were conducive to monopoly. Every master, being a principal inhabitant and exercising a particular calling, was compelled to enter the Company of his own particular craft, or deemed unable to exercise it in the Town. Many Companies possessed from forty to fifty members, their funds being kept up by payments, and the donations of benevolent members, often made by will. On public occasions the Companies gave a liberal hand; they raised soldiers when the State required it, and trained them. In 1449 they enrolled seven hundred men for the Town's defence. When Kings visited Coventry, the Companies were represented in procession. They assisted in proclaiming the fair, whilst in pre-Reformation times each had a particular pageant or mystery play, occasionally performed in the public streets. They employed priests to sing Mass for them daily in the Chapels of the Churches. They subscribed towards the relief of their fellow-citizens in times of calamity, and extended the hand of charity to their afflicted neighbours by contributing to various towns and villages when devastated by fire. As in London, it early became the custom at Coventry that no person should take an apprentice unless such person was a member of a trade or mystery, and free of the City. Whilst a master was bound to cause the covenant to be enrolled, no apprentice after his term, fully served, was allowed to follow his calling in the City before he had been sworn of the freedom, and thereupon enrolled. Ancient usage fixed the term at not less than seven years, and the Leet ordered that the freemen of the Companies should go to the Chapel of their Company on the Sabbath-day with their apprentices before them. Thus the burgesses became freemen, and the privileges of a citizen were gained by apprenticeship only; exception being made to a few noble and distinguished persons chosen honorary. In time every individual householder became free, and the elective franchise came to them, for there remained no burgesses who were not free of a Company.

Disturbances arose on St. Andrew's day, 1423, by the preaching of John Grace, a hermit, in the Little Park. He was withstood by Richard Crosby, the Prior, who, proposing to denounce as accursed those who heard him, from the pulpit of Trinity Church, a commotion ensued. The Mayor protected the Prior from the people's violence, and Grace was committed to gaol; but the Earl of Warwick was appointed by the King's Council to enquire into the trouble. The next year the journeymen, seeing the merry feasts of their masters, determined to have a Guild of their own, and calling it after St. George, they appointed master and officers; but the King forbade their meetings.

King Henry granted in 1445 a Charter whereby inquisitions and enquiries were to be taken at Coventry by the burgesses, and not by outsiders. The King and Queen visited Coventry in September, 1450, and were received by the Mayor and his

brethren, whilst the Recorder, Thomas Lyttelton, made a pleasing speech ; and the next year King Henry granted a most important Charter, which increased the liberties of the City. Taking the hamlets of Radford, Keresley, Folkeshill, Eccleshull, Anstey, Shulton, Calloughdon, Wyken, Henley, Leewood End, Stoke, Biggin, Whitley, Pinley, Asthull, Horwell, Hernehall, and Whabberley, with parts of Sowe and Stivechall, from the County of Warwick, and adding them to the Town, he created the County of the City of Coventry, and made the Bailiffs of the Town, Sheriffs of the new County, with a monthly Court and jurisdiction. Writs were to be sent to the Sheriffs, the Mayor was to be Steward of the King's Household in the City, and other privileges were granted. Recorder Lyttelton was a famous Sergeant-at-Law, who successively became King's Sergeant, Judge of the Court of the Palace, Knight of the Bath, and in 1466, Judge of Common Pleas. He was born at Frankley in Worcestershire, and from his work upon "Tenures," which Sir Edward Coke, another Recorder of Coventry, did much to bring into notice, he has been called the English Justinian.

With their new Charter, and after so long a lapse of time, the townsmen were now called upon to elect two Burgesses to the Parliament meeting at Reading on the 6th March, 1452. The return, dated 13th February, is torn, and gives but one name,

WILLIAM ELTON.

It is probable that the elective franchise of the freeholders without the Town, but within the newly-made County, was at this time transferred to Coventry, still it is by no means clear that they enjoyed the same.

The nobles were preparing for war, and the country was unsettled. On the Eve of Corpus Christi, 1447, in a dispute between Sir Humphrey Stafford and Sir Richard Harcourt, near Broadgate, the former's son and others were slain ; and in September, 1451, during the sitting of a Council of Peers at Coventry for the reconciliation of Richard Duke of York and Edmund Duke of Somerset, there arose a great affray between the latter's men and the Town guard, in which two or three of the citizens were killed. The alarm bell was rang, and the people would have seized Somerset had not the Duke of Buckingham prevented them.

Edward, son of Henry VI., was created Prince of Wales 1453-4.

Coventry played an important part during the War of the Roses. The standard of Lancaster was set up in the grounds of a house adjoining Cheylesmore, whilst the Red Rose partizans met in Much Park Street. Citizen distrusted citizen, but the Authorities favouring Henry and his Queen, the larger party of townsmen sided with them. The Battle of St. Alban's, 22nd May, 1455, placed York as Protector, and the Government into the hands of his friends. Coventry does not appear to have sent members to the Parliament that met in July, but the King and Queen visited the Town and stayed at the Priory, where, on the 11th of October, Lord Chancellor Bouchier delivered up the seals of office to the King ; York, Salisbury, and Warwick

being present, when Waynfleet, Bishop of Winchester, was appointed his successor.

In 1456 Queen Margaret removed the Court to Coventry, in order by the change to benefit the King's health, and York, Salisbury, and Warwick were invited to attend, but having received warning that the Queen had sinister designs, they fled to their Castles. After the defeat at Blore Heath in September, 1459, the Queen came again to the City, where, rallying her friends and forces, she gathered an army, and marching to Ludlow dispersed the rebels. Again the King and Queen retired to Coventry, and by writs dated at Ludlow, 9th October, summoned a Parliament to meet on the 20th November following at Coventry. The Lords met in the Chapter House, and numbered thirty-two. The Commons, who were chosen without free election, one hundred and twenty in number, assembled in the Great Hall. The Town was an armed Lancastrian Camp, and no Yorkist dare put in an appearance. There is no record of any Coventry members at this meeting. The King sitting in his chair of State in the Chapter House, Chancellor Waynfleet declared the reason of the Parliaments being called, and the Commons chose William Tresham, Knight of the Shire of Northampton, as their Speaker, who being allowed, a Bill of Attainder against York, March, Rutland, Warwick, Salisbury, and numerous other rebel Lords, was considered. The instrument contains many treasonable charges against the Yorkists, who afterwards nick-named the Assembly "Parliamentum Diabolicum," or the Devil's Parliament. The Bill passed, but the King had a clause inserted whereby he could pardon the insurgents if they sought mercy. The whole of the members took an oath of fealty to the King and his issue, and Edward, Prince of Wales, petitioned that he might enjoy the Duchy of Cornwall and its revenues, which was granted. On the 25th December, the Lord Chancellor thanking Parliament for its attendance, dissolved it by the King's command.

Matters were, however, approaching a climax. The Earl of March proceeded towards Coventry, and the Queen's forces met his at Northampton on the 10th July, 1460, where the Yorkists were victorious, and the King taken prisoner. To the Westminster Parliament, called by York in the King's name on the 7th October, no Coventry men appear to have been returned. A commission was granted to the Duke to sit in Coventry and other towns to punish for "faults to the King's laws," but he was killed at Wakefield in December. In February following the Queen's forces defeated Warwick near St. Alban's, but retreated before the Earl of March, who was proclaimed King in London. After the Battle of Northampton, the Parliament at Westminster, October, 1461, repealed the Acts made in the Coventry Assembly, and expunged the proceedings from the Statute Book, whilst the Sheriffs were ordered to proclaim in their Counties that all deeds done thereat were null and void.

CHAPTER VII.

INTERRUPTED RETURNS AND POLITICAL EVENTS.

From Edward IV. (1461) to Richard III. (1485).

Coventry men at Towton—King pardons Recorder Lyttelton—Sheriff's order to arrest Warwick and Clarence—The King and Council at Coventry—Earl and Duke acquitted—Henry Boteler chosen Burgess—Earl Rivers and his son beheaded—The King-maker's influence—His occupation of Coventry—The King's summons—Retires to Warwick—Battle of Barnet—Return of King to Coventry—Seizure of liberties—How restored—Queen Margaret brought a prisoner—Henry Boteler and John Wyldegrise chosen Burgesses—Some account of them—City Merchants and their callings—Prince Edward stands Godfather to the Mayor's child—Keeps Court at Cheylesmore—Henry Boteler and John Wyldegrise again chosen—Disturbances—Riding the liberties originated—Civic Regalia stolen—Death of Recorder Lyttelton—Henry Boteler chosen to the office—Richard III. at Coventry—His order to the Mayor—Battle of Bosworth Field.



EDWARD IV. was installed King at Westminster on 4th March, 1461, and he gained the victory at Towton on the 29th. A detachment of Coventry men fought on Henry's side, and for a time the Sheriffs were forbidden to proceed judicially, but in the next year the King allowed his predecessor's Charter of County extension; and pardoning Recorder Lyttelton, made him Under-Sheriff of Worcestershire; whilst in 1466 he became a Judge of Common Pleas. The Battles of Hedgeley Moor and Hexham, in 1464, closed the war for a time. In the latter part of 1465 the Earl of Warwick and others were accused of treason, and Edward issued writs to the Sheriffs of Coventry to apprehend him and the Duke of Clarence. The King came with his Council to the Town, attended by two hundred English archers. The King, Queen, and nobility kept Christmas for six days at the Priory. The Archbishop of York accompanied Warwick to Coventry, and Clarence also appeared, when the charges against the two noblemen were proved to be frivolous.

A local chronicler has it that

HENRY BOTELEK

was returned to the Westminster Parliament of 1467, and that the name of the other member is lost.

The Earl of Warwick's influence at Coventry was considerable, and his aversion to the Queen's family became well known. The Rebels, headed by Sir William Coniers, defeated the Royal troops at Edgecote on July 26th, 1469, and a week later Richard

Woodville, Earl Rivers; then Lord Treasurer; and John his son, were seized at Chepstow; and on being forwarded to Coventry, were put to death at Gosford Green, early in August. Edward was captured by the Archbishop of York at Olney, and conducted to Coventry, where he met Warwick and Clarence, and was detained for about a week. The first batch of privy seals, issued under Warwick's influence, are dated at Coventry on August 2nd. Subsequently Edward fled, and Warwick and Clarence released Henry from the Tower. Edward Prince of Wales, son of King Henry, had been married to Warwick's daughter Ann.

Edward landed at Ravenspur 11th March, 1471, and Richard, Earl of Warwick, came to Coventry on Mid-Lent Sunday with a quantity of ordnance and war material, together with 6,000 troops, when, resting behind its walls, he hastily summoned his friends in the Midlands. Edward, with some 10,000 well-armed men, came from Leicester to Combe Abbey, proceeding from whence, he came to Coventry on the 29th March, but finding the Town gates closed and the Earl in possession, withdrew into the open, and endeavoured to draw the Lancastrians into a battle. Failing in this, he hastened to Warwick town, and Clarence joined him. The Earl refused offers of peace, and finally the Yorkists advanced to London. Warwick thereupon left Coventry, and was defeated and killed at Barnet on the 14th of April following.

The Battle of Tewkesbury, May 4th, 1471, ended in victory for York, and closed the wars. Edward Prince of Wales was slain, and King Henry in the same month put to death. King Edward proceeded to Coventry on the 11th of May, and refreshed his troops for three days in the Town, during which time Queen Margaret was brought a prisoner to the King. On the 14th the King had tidings that the rebels in the north had dispersed, and Northumberland coming to the City, interceded for their leaders' pardon; whereupon the King's Council altered the army's course towards London, to oppose the Kentish rebels. On the rebellion being quelled, various persons connected with it were tried, and on being sent to Coventry, were beheaded. The City received chastisement at this time for its adherence to the Lancastrian Monarch, for Edward seized the liberties of the Town and took away the Civic sword from the Mayor, and yard from the Sheriffs, whilst the citizens were fined 500 marks.

With the advent of peace, a Parliament was summoned at Westminster on the 6th October, 1472, and on the 1st September two Citizens for "Coventry City" (as the returns state, and not City and County) were chosen, being

HENRY BOTELER AND JOHN WYLDEGRISE.

Henry Boteler, or Butler, possibly came from the Lancashire family of that name, but whether he was related to Ralph Boteler, Lord of Sudley, is unknown. Henry was successively chosen Steward of Cheylesmore and Recorder of Coventry. He died on New Year's Eve, 1489, and was buried at St. Michael's Church; where his obit was annually celebrated, and for which he settled certain lands in Kinwaldsey, which Isabell,

his widow, conveyed to the Corporation. John Wyldegrise was an Alderman of Coventry. His name is written Wyldegrise, Wyldegrise, and Wylgrees. He was Mayor in 1459, and was a member of the Drapers' Company. In 1474 he exhibited the iron rods and standard measures used at Coventry for measuring cloth before the Barons of the Exchequer, which were returned. He died 12th of August, 1494, leaving the Star Inn, in Earl Street, to his Company; the rent whereof was given for a priest at St. Michael's to celebrate his obit in the Lady Chapel. He also left monies to the High Altar at St. Michael's and to the Grey Friars.

The merchants of Coventry now extended their trades, of which the manufacture of woollen and broadcloths was the most considerable. Glass-painting appears to have been carried on, and the art of dyeing was also practised with considerable success. The King, desirous of making friends with the citizens, paid them frequent visits, and his son Edward was soon created Prince of Wales. This Prince, in 1474, then but a boy, on coming to Coventry was presented with a cup and £100, when he stood godfather to the Mayor, Richard Braytoft's child, and the same year the King kept Easter in the City. In 1477 the youthful Prince again visited his possession, kept Court at Cheylesmore, and was made a Brother of the Guilds of Corpus Christi and Holy Trinity.

To Parliament assembling 16th of January, 1478,

HENRY BOTELER AND JOHN WYLDEGRYS

were returned. No returns have been found from this time until the commencement of Edward the Sixth's reign, except some very imperfect ones of 21st and 33rd Henry VIII. Disputes with the Churchmen respecting the pasturage of certain lands led to the riding of the liberties of the City, and in 1480 a considerable tumult occurred, wherein the inhabitants, being summoned by the ringing of the Town bell, opened a pasture which had been before enclosed. The King wrote to the Mayor respecting the keepership of the gaol, and the same year the old sword and best mace were stolen from the Mayor's House.

The Recorder, Sir Thomas Lyttelton, died 23rd August, 1481. He was buried in Worcester Cathedral, and about the same time Henry Boteler was chosen to the office.

Edward IV. died in 1483, and no Parliament sat during the brief reign of Edward V. One Parliament only was called by Richard III., meeting 23rd January, 1484, when his son Edward was created Prince of Wales, the Manor of Cheylesmore coming to him, but he died during his father's lifetime. Richard, with his Court, kept Christmas at Kenilworth, and saw the plays at Coventry on the Feast of Corpus Christi.

On Richmond's landing, King Richard prepared to meet him, and writing to the Mayor and Sheriffs of Coventry, requested that his messengers should be assisted and his enterprise forwarded, but the chief citizens were lukewarm in his cause, and probably in secret aided his opponent at the Battle of Bosworth.

CHAPTER VIII.

EARLY TUDOR TIMES AND TROUBLES.

Henry VII. (1485 to 1509).

The King at Coventry—Knights the Mayor—Sir Robert Onley chosen—Parliamentary Returns missing—Justices and people—Early religious troubles—Pretenders—The King and his Council at Coventry—Thomas Harrington beheaded—Death of Recorder Boteler—Levies—Inclosures—Payment introduced for swearing Freemen—Local rhyme—Laurance Saunders' speech against Authorities—Champions the Commonalty—Is imprisoned and fined—Royal visits—Princess Catherine and Cheylesmore—Thomas Bond and his foundation.



THE new Monarch, after his victory at Bosworth, proceeded to Coventry, where Robert Onley, the Mayor, and citizens were as favourable to his cause as they had been adverse to Richard's. The King and his friends were entertained and feasted, whilst the former was presented with a cup and £100. Henry knighted the Mayor, and stayed at his house adjoining the Bull Inn, Smithford Street. At a later date the King granted confirmatory Letters Patent to the City. The returns of the Commons for the Parliaments of this reign are missing, but a less authentic authority records that

SIR ROBERT ONLEY

was sent in 1485, and from his Civic position it is probably correct. He was a merchant; whose ancestor, John Onley, Mayor in 1396, was the first Englishman born in Calais after its occupation by the English, and whose father had been standard-bearer to Edward III. Coventry returned members in Henry the Seventh's reign, but the other names are unknown.

The chief men of the City were exceedingly loyal, and kept the Commonalty in subjection. They benefited by the change of Government, and the Council House became more powerful. Still at times the people were unruly, and the Justices had to resort to harsh and unpleasant measures, as when dissatisfaction with the teaching of the Church was shown at Coventry in 1485; and John Blomston, Richard Hegham, Robert Crowther, John Smith, Roger Brown, Thomas Butler, John Falkes, Richard Hilmin, and Margery Goyt, were brought before Dr. Hales, charged with heresy. They were ordered to recant, and for penance to carry fagots about the Cross on market day. Thus early was planted the seed of that great religious movement in the sixteenth century, which culminated with the reformation of the Church in this country.

Pretenders to the throne caused considerable trouble in 1486-7, and the proceedings of Lambert Simnel in Ireland, claiming to be the Earl of Warwick, disturbed the public mind. The King, with many Lords, spiritual and temporal, came to Coventry accompanied by a considerable force upon St. George's day, and held a Council at the Priory, when the Archbishop of Canterbury, from the chair in the Cathedral, cursed by bell, book, and candle all such as would impugn King Henry's right. Early in June, Thomas Harrington, an Oxford organ maker's youth, calling himself the son of the Duke of Clarence, was taken, and being condemned, was sent to Coventry for execution, where he was beheaded on the conduit opposite the Bull Inn, and his body buried at the Grey Friars. The Mayor received the King's mandate on the 8th of June, shortly after Simnel's landing in Lancashire, ordering all troops coming in the City to immediately join the Royal forces at Banbury.

Coventry lent £1,100 to the King in the "benevolence" raised in 1491 for the French war, which was eventually paid back; and during 1496, when Scotland was aiding the pretender Perkin Warbeck, a summons was sent to the Mayor for two Citizens to attend the King's Council upon pressing needs, whilst shortly after money was ordered to be raised by the "loan or prest" in the Town.

The inclosure of arable lands and the turning of them into pasture were burning questions with the people; for thereby less persons were employed in agriculture, and the system led to the decay of towns and villages. Parliament in 1490 passed an Act beneficial to the question, but did not absolutely forbid inclosure. From early date a considerable portion of land around the Town lay in an open and commonable state all the year round, and there were certain arable fields and meadow lands which were closed from spring time to Lammas, in order to secure the harvest. Bounds were ridden yearly at Lammas day, when the inclosures were reopened, and remained so between harvest and seed time. Interference with the custom was not agreeable to some of the inhabitants; and an Act for the maintainance of drapery, the keeping of wool within the Realm, and the limiting of the price of cloth, did not please all persons; whilst during 1493 an order of Leet was made requiring each apprentice, on being sworn in, to pay thirteen pence before he could obtain the freedom of the City; and none were allowed to ride Lammas unless they paid the fine, whereupon the following verses were fixed to a door of St. Michael's, to the no small concern of the Mayor and Council House:—

"Be it knowen and understand,
 This Cite shulde be free and nowe is bonde.
 Dame Goode Eve (Godiva) made hit free,
 And nowe (is enacted) y^e custome for woll and y^e drap'ie.
 Also hit is made y^t no 'prentis shalbe,
 But xiiij penyes pay shulde he;
 Y^t act did Rob^t Grene. (Mayor 1493-4)
 Y^tfor he had many a curse, I wene.

And now a noy^r rule ye do make,
 Y^t non shall ryde at Lamas but they y^t ze take.
 When our ale is tunned,
 Ze shall have drynk to yo^r cake.

Ye have put on^t man like a Scot to raunsome,
 Y^t wol be remembered when ze have all forgote."

Master Laurence Saunders, a member of the Council House, who before time had complained that the Master of St. John's Hospital was allowed to place an unlimited number of sheep on the commons, whilst the commoners themselves were not allowed to exceed their usual rate, being exasperated at the changes made, on Lammas day, 1494, boldly sided with the people against the Authorities. "Sirs," said he, "hear me, we shall nev^r have our right, till we have st'^ken of the heds of iij or iiij of thes' churls that rulⁿ us, and if thereaft^r hit be asked who did yt dede, hit shal be seid me and they, and they and me," for which and a subsequent outrage he was imprisoned and fined £40. During his incarceration still more curious verses appeared, part of which declare

"Our comens y^t at Lamas open shuld be cast,
 They be closed in and hegged full fast,
 And he y^t speketh for o^r right is in ye hall, (gaol)
 And y^t is shame for yowe and for us all;
 You can not denygh hit but he is yo^r broy^r;
 And to bothe Gilds he hath paid asmoche as aⁿoyt."

The remainder of the lines tell that the Council was estranged from the people. For his injudicious words, Saunders was also dismissed the Council House, and discharged, under heavy penalty, from again riding with the Chamberlains at Lammas. Afterwards the case was invested by the Privy Council, and as he refused to be on good behaviour, he was again imprisoned.

The King and Queen came to the Town in 1492 and saw the plays; and in 1497 Arthur, Prince of Wales, visited Coventry, being presented by the Authorities with a cup and £100; whilst in 1499 the King and Queen again came to the City, and were made members of the Trinity Guild. The Prince married Catherine of Arragon, in November, 1501, and she had for her dowry a third part of the principality of Wales, Cornwall, and Chester, and amongst the various Castles and lands granted to her were "Cheylesmore Manor House and certain ground rents at Coventry," but the Prince died in April, 1502.

Mr. Thomas Bond, a draper, and member of the Council House, who was Mayor in 1497, founded the Hospital for old men at Bablake in 1506, an institution which became of great worth to the City, whereby many old and decayed persons were relieved from poverty and distress, but its funds were often prostituted to political purposes, as future Chapters will show.



*yo wooder
Edmund knyghtley*

SIR EDMUND KNIGHTLEY, KNT.,

Recorder of Coventry, 1525

DIED 1545.

From a Brass in Fawsley Church,

(With helmet removed.)

CHAPTER IX.

CHURCH REFORMERS AND LAND PURCHASERS.

Henry VIII. (1509 to 1547)

A Royal visit—Parliaments and Commissions—Religious persecutions and martyrs—Ralph Swillington, Recorder—William Ford founds hospital—Edmund Knightley, Recorder—Civic troubles—Royal visits—John Bond and Roger Wygston, Esq., returned—Their biography—First Reformation Parliament—Smaller Monasteries suppressed—Apprenticeship and trades—Queen Anne and Coventry—Bond and Wygston again chosen—Henry Over and Christopher Warren returned—Account of them—Suppression of larger Monasteries at Coventry—Roger Wygston and Henry Over returned—Death of former—Edward Saunders chosen—His biography—Made Recorder—Bishop Lee—Cathedral doomed—The Monasteries destroyed—Land grants and new possessors—Corporation have the Grey Friars—Town impoverished—Members unknown—Bill to suppress Churches—Troubles of the clergy—Act to dissolve Guilds, Chantries, etc.



ENRY and Queen Catherine visited Coventry in 1510. To four Parliaments between 1509 and 1528 no returns are found. Commissions of the burgesses sat in the City in 1512, and 1513, for collecting tenths and fifteenths, and one hundred men were also raised for foreign service.

The magistrates again had difficult work to perform, for religious disbelief prevailed in the Town, and in 1510, Mrs. Rowley, Joan Ward, and others were charged with heresy, and adjudged to carry faggots in the Market Square. Mistress Ward, still persisting, was publicly burned in the Little Park. Again in 1519 it became necessary to make example of the little band of earnest reformers at Coventry, who, refusing to obey the Pope or his agents, daily said the Lord's Prayer, Ten Commandments, and Creed in their mother's tongue rather than in the Latin; whereupon Mrs. Langdaile, Alice Smith, Thomas Langdaile, Hosea Hawkins, Thomas Wrexham, Robert Hocket, and Thomas Bond, citizens and persons of respectability, suffered martyrdom at the same spot. Robert Silkeby, who denied that Christ was bodily in the Sacrament, fled; but being captured, was also burned at the stake soon after.

Ralph Swyllington was Recorder in 1515. As a lawyer, his promotion was due to Cardinal Wolsey. He possessed an estate at Shilton, and in 1524 was appointed Attorney-General. His effigy, with that of his wife and her first husband, Thomas Essex, are on a tomb in St. Michael's Church. In 1522 there was a plot to kill the Mayor and Aldermen, rob St. Mary's Hall, and seize the Royal Castle of Kenilworth, whereupon two persons being taken, were ordered to be hung in the City.

Mr. William Ford, a merchant of the Staple, founded in 1529 an hospital for five poor men and one woman near the Grey Friars.

In 1525, Edmund Knightley, the second son of a wealthy Northamptonshire landowner, was Recorder of Coventry, as appears from his two letters in the City MSS. The Recorder's father, Sir Richard Knightley, of Fawsley, near Daventry, possessed no less than forty-one Manors in different counties, and had married the heiress Joan Skenard, of Alderton. By their marriage they were blessed with four sons, Richard, Thomas, Edmund, and Valentine, and when death laid the old Knight low in 1534, his eldest son, Sir Richard Knightley, of Upton, succeeded, but although married, died without male issue, and Sir Edmund succeeded. The worthy City Recorder was soon busy with the duties of his office, for without Coventry were certain commonable lands which had been enclosed, and on Lammas Day, 1524-5, the inhabitants pulled up the gates and hedges to assert their ancient rights, when New Gate on the road to London was shut against the Chamberlains, and a riot ensued. The Mayor was sent in custody to London, and removed from office, and the matter came before the King's Council, who appointed the senior Alderman, John Humphrey, Governor. Sir Edmund wrote to the Alderman, and in November the King directed that the disturbers of the peace and the slanderers of the chief men of the City should be sent to Wolsey for examination. The Recorder addressed a letter at Christmas to the Mayor and Aldermen, and the King's Council finally remitted the punishments awarded to the leaders. Edmund Knightley represented Wilton in 1529, and was called as Sergeant-at-Law, with ten other eminent lawyers, in 1531, who, keeping their feast at Ely House, in London, for five days together, on the last entertained the King and Queen. This was after Wolsey's fall, and Sir Edmund became one of the reforming party. He married a sister of John, Earl of Oxford, Lord Chamberlain to King Henry, and in 1542 obtained, by royal grant, considerable portions of Monastic property, including Church land at Studley, and the Coventry Priory estates at Offchurch and Southam, which had considerable revenues. He was on the Commission appointed for the dissolution of the Monasteries, and his letter about Catesby Abbey is often quoted. He built the great hall at Fawsley, but dying in December, 1545, was buried at the Church of St. Peter, in the Park there; where his monumental brass shows him with his wife and their six daughters.

Princess Mary visited the City in 1525, stayed two days at the Priory, and was presented with 100 marks. In 1534, Henry Duke of Richmond, the King's natural son, and his father-in-law, Thomas Duke of Norfolk, were, on the occasion of their visit, "banquetted in the street on horseback."

The choice of the electorate at this period was in a great measure in the hands of the Crown, and in Parliament the King submitting to no refusal, carried what acts he liked, and the Assembly became a mere court to register his desires; yet it gained extended privileges, for many useful measures were passed, and longer Parliaments

introduced. One summoned to meet at London on the 3rd November, 1529, was not dissolved until 4th April, 1536, to which Coventry returned

JOHN BOND AND ROGER WYGSTON, ESQ.

John Bond was a draper, and became Mayor in 1519. He was the son of Thomas Bond, the founder of the Hospital at Bablake, and for some years after his father's death kept the old men by weekly payments. By will made in 1537, he left certain lands to the Master and Brethren of Trinity Guild for the maintenance of the Hospital. Roger Wygston, who in the return is called "Armiger," came from a Leicestershire family, several of whom represented Leicester, and he himself sat for that borough in 1522. Mr. Wygston became possessor of the estate of Shortley, near the City, and was a Commissioner to visit the minor Monasteries. He profited not a little by purchases of their lands, and obtained the site of Wolston Priory; whilst as Steward of that at Pinley, in southern Warwickshire, he, with his sister Margaret (the Prioress there), had annual pensions. His son William (who was knighted by Queen Mary) obtained the Manor and lands at Pinley, with other possessions at Shrewley, Claverdon, and Langley. Upon the site of Wolston Priory the Wygstons built a fair house of stone, incorporating a portion of the older buildings therewith, placing on the roof the following verse:—

"I goe to bed as to my grave,
God knows if I may wake;
But, Lord, I trust Thou wilt me save,
And me in mercy take."

With other members of his family, Roger Wygston founded a Hospital at Leicester, and he was Sheriff of Warwick and Leicestershire in 1541.

After the Pope's stand against his divorce, the King took up the cause against Rome. The Parliament meeting 1529 became known as "the first Reformation Parliament," for by substituting the Royal for Papal authority, it practically established the Church of England. It forbade the payment of Peter's pence, which at that time amounted to £10 per annum in the Coventry diocese. By Act of Parliament the King was declared supreme head of the Church, and the Papal power utterly abolished in England. A visitation of the Monastic Houses followed, and in 1536 Parliament authorized the suppression of the smaller Monasteries whose incomes did not reach £200 per annum.

A law passed at this time required every child to be brought up to some business or calling. Tradesmen's children and those who could afford small entrance fees were apprenticed to trades, the rest to agriculture. If their parents or friends were unable to secure for them an ultimate maintenance, the Justices had authority to take such children and apprentice them as they saw fit; thus arose poor apprentices. The Leet in 1535 again required each householder at Coventry to enter into one of the Companies,

and thereby attach himself to a particular trade, necessitating freedom of a Company before he became allowed to carry on trade within the Town.

The King was privately married to Anne Boleyn by Roland Lee, Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, and she wrote, 7th September, 1534, to the Mayor of Coventry from Greenwich, announcing the birth of Princess Elizabeth.

This Parliament, sitting for nearly six and a half years, was dissolved in 1536, and two months after, another met on the 8th June in that year, whereto

JOHN BOND AND ROGER WYGSTON, ESQ.,

were again returned. The Prior of Coventry received the King's summons, and attended in the Lords. This Parliament was dissolved on 18th July following.

The returns of the Parliament which met 28th April, 1539, are lost, but from the building agreement of the Coventry Cross, it appears that

HENRY OVER AND CHRISTOPHER WARREN

were the "Citizens" that year.

Henry Over was a mercer. His attendances at the Council House date from 1532 to 1566. He served as Alderman and Sheriff, and became Mayor in 1543-4. Sir William Holleys, Lord Mayor of London in 1541 (who was born at Stoke, near Coventry), built a market cross for the Town during 1541-2-3, and entrusted Messrs. Over and Warren with the money for its erection. Dame Swillington, in 1547, after the death of the Recorder, seeing "the highways nigh and without Coventry and in Stivichall in bad repair," gave Mr. Over seven score pounds, and willed by word of mouth before her death, desiring Mr. Over to purchase lands wherefrom they should be yearly repaired, and any surplus rent given to the poor of Coventry, which Mr. Over faithfully carried out, and appointed Trustees. In 1551 he negotiated the purchase of a portion of the dissolved monastic lands, in which Sir Thomas White, Alderman of London, was interested, which eventually came to the Corporation as Trustees for loans and gifts; he also gave £500 to be put out on loan to fifty men, £10 each, without any interest, for three years. After the dissolution he purchased "the Charter House," and "enjoyed it many years," living there. He died in 1566. Christopher Warren was a draper. He was the son of Thomas Warren, Mayor in 1518, and married Catharine, daughter of John Coxon, of Coventry. During his Mayoralty in 1541-2 the aforesaid Cross was building. There is a peculiar statement made about the Alderman, by Robert Glover the Martyr, written whilst a prisoner at Coventry, which Fox records thus: "The second day after the Bishop's coming to Coventry, Mr. Warren came to the Guildhall and commanded the Chief Gaoler to present me before the Bishop (Glover had been wrongly apprehended). I laid to Mr. Warren's charge the cruel seeking of my death; and when he would have excused himself, I told him he could not so wipe his hands, for that he was as guilty of my blood in the sight of God

as though he had murdered me with his own, and so he departed from me, saying, 'I should have no cause to fear, if I would be of his belief.'" Mr. Warren held Ernesford Grange, at Binley (a fragment of the dissolved Priory lands), and by will left money for three sermons to be preached in Trinity Church yearly.

The King now caused a Bill for the suppression of the larger Monasteries to be brought into Parliament, to which arose opposition, and his minister Cromwell promised a share of the Church's spoils to some members of both Houses before it passed. Under the Acts 1536 and 1539 fell priestly rule at Coventry. The Monasteries were dissolved, and the Prior lost his seat in the Lords. St. Mary's Benedictine Priory, with a yearly revenue of between £700 and £800 per annum, together with St. Ann's Carthusian Priory, having a clear annual value of £131 6s. 8d., were surrendered to the King in January, 1539, as were also the White Friars' Monastery, with a smaller clear revenue of £7 13s. 8d., and that of the Grey Friars', which had no endowment. The Prior, sub-Prior, and nine Monks of St. Mary's had annuities amounting to £209 during life, the Prior having £133 6s. 8d. allotted for loss of dignity and seat in the Lords; whilst the Prior of St. Ann's received £40 annually for his life, and his Monks, annuities amounting to £52. The Warden and thirteen Friars of the White Friars' Monastery, and the Warden and ten Friars of the Grey Friars', received no pension, the King conceiving that "the poor mendicant Friars had lived so long by begging that they could still afford to subsist by their trade." The Crown thus came into possession of the incomes, estates, lands, houses, tithes and revenues of the Monasteries of the City and neighbourhood, and soon disposed of them to greedy possessors.

The old Parliament was dissolved on the 24th July, 1540, and a new one met 16th January, 1541-2, to which

ROGER WYGSTON AND HENRY OVER

were returned. During the sittings Mr. Wygston died, and

EDWARD SAUNDERS,

Sergeant-at-Law, was chosen to fill his place. Edward Saunders was a son of Thomas Saunders, of Sibertoft, Northants, and Margery, daughter of Richard Cave, of Stansfield, but his family possibly sprang from the older Coventry branch. He entered the Middle Temple, and was called to the Bar in 1535, promoted to Sergeant-at-Law, 1540, and King's Sergeant, in 1542. He represented Coventry in 1542, and Lostwithiel in 1548. His wife was Margaret, daughter of Sir Thomas Englefield. He acted as a Commissioner for the sale of church lands in Northampton, and, having an easy conscience, changed his religion to suit the times. He was, about 1542, chosen Recorder of Coventry. In the local MSS. are his letters to the Mayor, 1545-6, respecting the Commissioners' charges to the City and excusing his attendance at Assize.

Bishop Lee, with tears, implored Lord Cromwell to spare Coventry's Cathedral,

and the answer comforted the troubled prelate, but when Dr. Loudon was sent to suppress the Monastery, the Bishop in fear wrote Cromwell beseeching that the church might stand and be brought to a college, but it was doomed, for the new nobility and gentry were eager to possess the spoils of the Church, and the Minister was powerless to prevent it. The King's surveyors were busy selling the materials and clearing the land, and on 27th June, 1542, the King granted the site of the Carthusian Priory to Richard Andrews and Leonard Chamberlain, who soon passed it to Mr. Over. The Franciscan Friary land (*inter alia*) was conveyed to the Mayor, Bailiffs, and Commonalty of Coventry. The Carmelite Monastery, its site and tenements, passed on the 27th of August, 1544, to Henry's diplomatic agent, Sir Ralph Sadler, Kt., Member for Hertford, who obtained in various parts of England confiscated property bringing in £3,000 per annum. Shortly after Sir Ralph passed his possessions at Coventry to Mr. John Hales, Clerk to the Hanaper. The site of the Benedictine Monastery, with divers messuages, gardens, and mills, was granted 28th July, 1545, to John Combe and Richard Stansfield, who afterwards passed it to John Hales; yet some parts of the Priory lands, etc., came to the City. The manors, lands, and tenements which the two greater Priories had in various places in Warwickshire, and elsewhere, also changed hands, and the revenues of the Monasteries being spent in other quarters, was vastly detrimental to the townsmen, and greatly impoverished the City.

This Parliament ended 28th March, 1544. A new one met 23rd November, 1545, but the Coventry members are unknown. A Bill to join such Churches as stood not more than a mile apart came before the House in 1546, but provisos were added that no consolidation should take place without the consent of the Mayor and Bailiffs of any borough affected, whilst Churches exceeding £6 value in the King's books were exempted, thus St. Michael's at £26, clear value, and Trinity at £10, escaped. The tithes had passed to the Crown; the Churches suffered, and all Papistical leanings were removed, whilst "there came a jealous fellow with a counterfeit commission from Parliament," who tore up the brasses and other memorials in the former Church, and decamped. Dr. Ramridge at St. Michael's and Dr. Darrington at Trinity were suspected of Romanism, and Thomas Saunders accused the former of heresy, for which he was seized, and lodged in the King's Bench prison for three years, but in 1547, having recanted, he became re-instated.

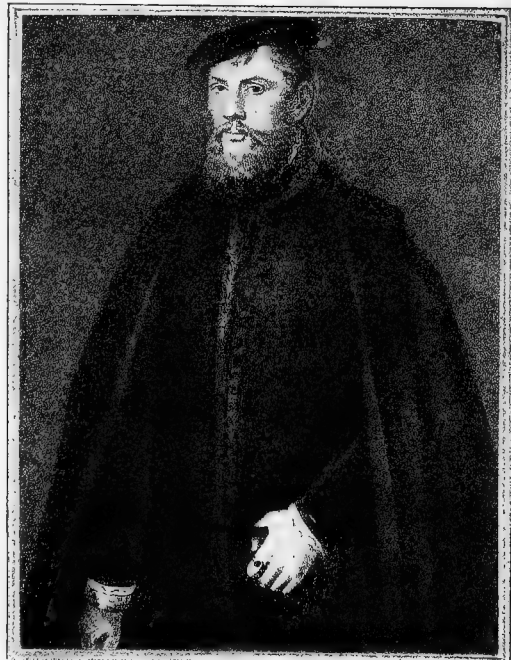
In December, 1546, a Bill to dissolve Colleges, Free Chapels, Chuntries, Hospitals, and Guilds, was brought before Parliament. The ancestors of citizens had freely endowed those at Coventry, but, great as the Burgesses must have objected to confiscation, little or no opposition was offered to the measure in Henry's time, for restitution in amended form was promised. The Bill passed, but the King's death upon 28th January, 1547, allowed little to be done.



MR. THOMAS BOND,
Mayor of Coventry, 1497.
Founder of Bond's Hospital, Coventry,
DIED, 1506.
(From the original picture at Bond's Hospital.)



SIR THOMAS WHITE, KNT.,
Lord Mayor of London, 1553,
Founder of Sir Thomas White's Charity, Coventry, &c.,
DIED, 1566.
(From an old and rare print.)



JOHN HALES, Esq.,
Of the White Friars, Coventry,
And Founder of the Free Grammar School in that City,
DIED, 1572.
(From a painting by Holbein, at the School.)

2/37 m c. Thomas White
older man of London

J: Hales

CHAPTER X.

RESULTS OF MONASTIC SUPPRESSION: ATTEMPTED TRADES REVIVAL.

Edward VI. (1547 to 1553).

The King's first Parliament—Protestant ascendancy—Christopher Warene and Henry Porter returned—Act to suppress Chantries, Guilds, etc.—Action of the Coventry Members—Special Bill for the City—Grants to Coventry—The burgesses and Bablake—Effect of the Dissolution—Mr. John Hales and the decay of Coventry—Builds and resides at the Friars—Commission on tillage—Decay and land enclosure—Bills in Parliament—The Park granted to the City—Charter for a three days fair—Attempted trades revival—Origin of City Fifties, Loans, and Gifts—Sir Thomas White—His biography—Purchase of Monastic and Guild properties—Loan to purchase the Park—A second Parliament—James Rogers and John Talbouts—Chancery proceedings against Mr. Thomas Bond—Parliament dissolved—The King's death.



UNDER the Protectorship of Seymour, Duke of Somerset, the reign of Edward VI., then only nine years old, commenced. Cranmer and the Protestants were busy reforming religious doctrines, and the changes embraced the new Liturgy in the Prayer Book of 1549, the King's admission of Bishops, and an Act for Uniformity of Service. Coventry had, a month before the assembling of Parliament on the 4th of November, 1547, chosen

CHRISTOPHER WARENE AND HENRY PORTER,

and it was not long before the City required their assistance. The Commissioners, under the Act to dissolve Colleges, Chantries, Hospitals, Free-Chapels, Guilds, and other Church property, had taken possession of little, and it became necessary that Parliament should pass another Bill in order that the new King might seize them. Cranmer and the Bishops, foreseeing that the parish clergy would be further crippled if the Statute passed, opposed it in the Lords; whilst the Commons greatly hindered progress. The Coventry Members viewed with no small concern their constituents interest threatened, and they spoke strongly against further spoliation. The Privy Council books tell how none "were stiffer nor more easily went about to impune the said article," declaring "that where their City was of much fame and antiquity, sometimes very wealthy, though now of late years brought into decay and poverty, and had not to the furniture of the whole multitude of the commons there; being to the number of eleven or twelve thousand houseling people; but two Churches wherein God's service could be done." Messrs. Warene and Porter were assisted by Messrs. Gawdy and Overend, the Burgesses for King's Lynn; they declared that the boroughs could

neither maintain their Churches, or keep up the Guilds and Fraternities, if the estates were given to the Crown, which argument turned the majority against that part of the Act in which the Guilds were concerned. Somerset agreed to the re-modelling of the Bill, and for the revenues of the foundations to be applied to the erection of Grammar Schools, the augmenting of Universities, and the better provision of the poor, whereby the Members for Coventry and King's Lynn were taken off by the Court party, and a promise made that their Guild lands should be restored. Thus the Bill passed.

A special Act relating to Coventry was introduced, for the Journals of the House state that on "7th February, 1548, the Bill for the City of Coventry was brought in and sent to Mr. Recorder" [Saunders]. This was read on the 12th, and two days after "it was ordered that Mr. Thomas Bond have a copy of the Bill, and make answer," but it passed the House on the 26th. Somerset made good his promises, and the King granted the Guilds and Chantries to the City on the 18th September. A petition had meanwhile been presented praying the King that the Church at Bablake might remain to the Town, which, with a portion of the Hospital there, passed to the Mayor, Bailiffs, and Commonalty, in December for a mere acknowledgment.

The effect of the Dissolution upon the City was deplorable. Business places became closed, and at so low an ebb was trade for want of the numerous persons who resorted to the Town before the suppression, that large numbers of the inhabitants were forced to leave the City and seek work elsewhere. With property changing hands, and repeated spoliation, fixity of tenure became uncertain, and the circulation of money all but ceased. Mr. John Hales, who was adding a house to the Friars for his residence, represented to the Protector, that the City had but 3,000 inhabitants, whereas before time there were 15,000. The woollen and other trades were at a standstill, poverty existed, and many an honest inhabitant, tramping the country in search of work, suffered under the new Act for the suppression of vagabonds.

Mr. Hales was a man of considerable learning, but had the misfortune in his youth, whilst running, to tread upon a dagger, which, penetrating into the sole of his foot, caused lameness. He this year represented Preston in Parliament, and was no idle member, for three Bills of his were considered, resulting from observations made in 1546 whilst acting on a Commission of enquiry into the questions of land enclosure and the decay of tillage, in Warwickshire and other Midland counties. This Commission incurred the displeasure of Dudley, Earl of Warwick, who was Steward of the Royal Household, but when Mr. Hales declared that enclosure and decay of tillage were bad for the nation, the young King adopted his suggestion for granting a general pardon : to the poor, for breaking enclosures ; and to the rich, for making them. When the lands were dis-enclosed, the latter began to fence them in again, for the law was not strong enough to stop their proceedings, and in the meantime a Riot Act was passed to stay risings in the future. The Bills of Mr. Hales were for the people's good.

"One Bill was for the rebuilding of farmhouses and buildings decayed, and its purpose was the maintainance of tillage and husbandry. The second was against regrating of victuals and other things, wherein one principal point was that neither grasiers nor others should buy any cattle, and sell the same within a given time. For as the said Hales had learned and knew of certainty divers grasiers and sheep masters brought both cattle and money to the market, and if they could not sell their own as dear as they listed they carried them home again and bought all the rest. These two Bills were first put to the Lords. The first, being read, was not liked. The second they allowed and augmented, and sent down to the Lower House, where it was so debated and tossed about, and at last committed to such men and there so much deferred, that men's affections might have been notably discovered; and perhaps (said Hales, relating this matter in a writing of his) he that had seen all this would have said 'That the lamb had been committed to the wolf's custody.' The third Bill was set forth first in the Lower House, and tendered to this end. That every man that kept in several pastures sheep or beasts should keep for every hundred sheep that he had over six score, two kine; and for every of these two kine should rear one calf. And for every two kine that he kept beside more than ten should rear one calf. By this means he thought and believed that the nation should not only have plenty of beasts, whereas there was wonderful decay, and also the markets should be replenished with milk, butter, and cheese, the common and principal sustenance of the poor. The said Hales had such an opinion of this Bill that he durst have laid his life on it that if it had proceeded there would have been within five years after the execution thereof such plenty of victuals and so good and cheap as never was in England, and besides, a great many good things ensue very necessary and profitable for the Commonwealth of the Country. Which neither by the execution of the late Commission nor yet by any positive law then in being could be holden, but, says Hales, Demetrius and his fellows soon spied whereunto the thing tended. There was then, 'Hold with me and I will hold with thee.' Some alleged the opinion of their fathers in time past (but these had been great sheep masters), who, when the like Bill had been propounded, would never consent unto it, but said when any scarcity of cattle was a Proclamation was made that no calves should be killed for a time. Some alleged that men then eat more flesh than they did in time past, and that in Lent and other fasting days heretofore the people eat neither milk, butter, nor cheese, and would have them do so again for policy sake, and thus these rich enclosers get the better of these good Bills intended for the benefit of the poor."

An Act was passed by this Parliament to encourage the manufacture of woollens and broadcloths of considerable moment to the Coventry trade.

In 1524 the Prior of Ulverscroft had obtained a lease of the Manor of Cheylesmore, with the herbage of the Park, for twenty-one years, from the late King, since which time the City had obtained some right to use the herbage until the lease expired in 1545, whereupon the Mayor, etc., petitioned him to lease it to them, but in July, 1549, Edward granted Cheylesmore and the Park to the Earl of Warwick, and his heirs, as part of the possessions of the Duchy of Cornwall, to hold *in capite*; and on the 12th of August following the Earl leased the premises to the Mayor, Bailiffs, etc., for ninety-nine years, with provision that they should pasture annually in the Park, eighty cows or heifers, and twenty geldings, belonging to the poor inhabitants of the City, paying for every cow or heifer one penny, and for every gelding twopence.

Somerset resigned the Protectorship in 1549. His opponent, Dudley, Earl of Warwick, succeeded, and soon afterwards was created Duke of Northumberland. The King confirmed previous Charters to Coventry in 1551. The City petitioned to have an annual fair in order to revive the trades of the place, and the King granted a Charter in the following year to the Mayor, Bailiffs, and Commonalty to hold one in the City for three days in October yearly, the profits whereof were to go to the Town.

Amidst the great disaster which had befallen the City, there were signs that the

chief men were alive to the necessity of trade revival, for they gave money freely to initiate a system whereby funds could be advanced, in varying sums, on free loans for certain periods to young men on commencing business and other necessitous inhabitants connected with the fellowships, subject to their finding security for the loans repayment at the end of a specified time, whereby arose "City Fifties." These aids to trade had been introduced at the commencement of the sixteenth century, when John Haddon, draper and Alderman, had given, in 1518, £300 for that and other purposes, and the system was extended by the gifts of Henry Over, Thomas White (Alderman of Bristol), John Tallonts, Thomas Wheatley, and various others; whilst as time rolled on, other charitable benefactions were also given to aid the City, such as the four pound gifts, etc. But by far the greatest benefactor to Coventry at this period was the Worshipful Sir Thomas White, London's Lord Mayor in the first year of Queen Mary, who, as a Merchant Taylor of that City, had large business connections with the tradesmen of Coventry, and other places. He was the son of William White, a clothier of Reading, where he was born in 1492. Being apprenticed to a London merchant when twelve years of age, he served seven years, and gained his freedom. The master and apprentice became greatly attached, and the former at his death bequeathed one hundred pound to him. On receiving a like sum from his father, in 1523, he embarked in business, and succeeded so well that he acquired a large fortune, and married. He became Master of his Company, and took great interest in Parliamentary and Municipal Government. In 1546 he was elected Sheriff, and became Lord Mayor in 1553. It was during his term of office that the insurrection under Sir Thomas Wyatt took place, and the effective measures which the Lord Mayor caused to be taken in suppressing it, obtained for him recognition and knighthood at the hands of Queen Mary. He was chosen member for Southampton County from 1547 to 1559 (in two Parliaments of Edward VI., five of Mary's, and the first of Elizabeth). Although constantly occupied in the exercise either of business engagements or municipal affairs, he still found time for interesting himself largely in benevolent actions, and became a princely benefactor, whereby no less than twenty-five towns were receivers of his generosity, amongst them Bath, Bristol, Coventry, Gloucester, Leicester, London, Nottingham, Oxford, Reading, Shrewsbury, Tunbridge, and Warwick. In 1542 Mr. White, "for the relief and preferment of the Commonwealth of the City of Coventry," in its great ruin and decay, and "at the request and mediation of certain friends," gave £1,400 to the Mayor, Bailiffs, and Commonalty, for the purchase of those Monastic lands which came to the City; the rents and profits, about £70 per annum, were to be applied in charitable gifts, or laid out in free loans to freemen, and after his death, to go in certain proportions to Coventry, Nottingham, Northampton, Leicester, and Warwick. The gift of this generous benefactor did not stay with the purchase of Monastic lands, for Stowe, in his "Survey of London," mentions the increase of his gift of £1,400 to

£2,060. Another authority, Mr. Edward Owen, Clerk to the Council House in 1692, has recorded that Sir Thomas added £1,000 to his first gift for the purchase of other lands, out of the profits whereof the Corporation were to pay £40 yearly to two Fellows of St John's, and apply any residue rents to the same purposes for which the £1,400 had been given; and in a letter to the Corporation, Sir Thomas speaks of £1,000 or thereabouts as given by him when they "purchased the Chantry lands." He further lent the Town £400 to buy the lease of the Park.

In 1555 Sir Thomas White founded the College of St. John's, at Oxford. It is stated that he had been directed in a dream to found a College upon a spot where he should find two stems of an elm springing from one root. He went to Oxford, and seeing a likely tree in Gloucester Hall garden, began at once to enlarge and widen the College there; but soon after, finding a tree without the north gate of Oxford like that in his dream, he founded St. John's, and endowed it with fifty fellowships, forty-three of which he reserved for the boys of the Merchant Taylors' School, two he gave to Coventry, and the others to Bristol, Reading, and Tunbridge Wells. He secured a license from Philip and Mary in 1555 to found the College, and two years after gave a new Charter to it. In 1557 his wife Avice died, leaving no issue, and he afterwards married Joan, the widow of his friend Sir Ralph Warren, Knight, a former Lord Mayor, by whom he had six children. He then lived either at London or Oxford, but the establishment of the College crippled his resources, and a correspondence with the Mayor, etc., of Coventry, but a few days before his death, shows that he had left himself but slenderly provided for. He died at Oxford 11th February, 1566, in his 74th year.

The Parliament dissolved 15th April, 1552, and a new one was called to assemble on the 1st of March in the following year. The King was apparently anxious that the new Assembly should be men of responsibility in their counties and boroughs; yet the Sheriffs were influenced, and both he and the Privy Council in many cases suggested the names of persons whom they should choose. The return for Coventry, which is defaced, gives

JAMES ROGERS AND JOHN TALBOUTS,

The City instituted proceedings in Chancery against Mr. Thomas Bond, the grandson of Thomas Bond the founder, who, in pursuance of his father John Bond's will, had set forth certain lands for the use of the Hospital at Bablake, which were insufficient to carry out the design of the original donor, and by decree 7th March, 1552, given by Thomas, Bishop of Ely, Lord Chancellor; and Judges Beaumont, Portman, and Hales, Mr. Bond was ordered to convey to twenty-four persons, named by Mr. Christopher Warene, certain properties towards the maintenance of ten men and one woman therein, and for the repairs of the almshouses.

Parliament barely submitted to Northumberland's ruling, and was dissolved 31st March. The King died on 7th July, 1553.

CHAPTER XI.

THE RELAPSE TO ROMANISM: MARIAN PARLIAMENTS AND MARTYRS.

Mary (1553 to 1558).

Northumberland proclaims Queen Jane—Directs Mayor of Coventry to do same—Who consults Recorder—They proclaim Queen Mary—Dudley seized and beheaded—Mary crowned—Rewards Recorder—Queen's Roman tendencies—Vicar of St. Michael's degraded—Mary's first Parliament—John Nethermyll and Thomas Bonde returned—Biographies—Wyatt's rebellion and Sir Thomas White—Suffolk's Secretary Kampton at Coventry—Plots and Plotters—Coventry gates shut against Suffolk—His capture and death—Religious persecution of Sheriff Hopkins—A second Parliament—Thomas Kyvet and Edward Dampert returned—Account of them—Queen's letters of Confirmation to City—Marriage of Philip and Mary—Edward Saunders knighted—Resigns Recordership—His further biography—John Throkmorton, Recorder—Account of him—First Parliament of Philip and Mary—Queen's order to Sheriffs—John Throkmorton and John Harford, Members—Some account of the latter—He leaves the Parliament—Is impeached—Coventry Martyrs: Lawrence Saunders (brother of Sir Edward); Robert Glover; Cornelius Bongey—Other local sufferers—Second Parliament of Philip and Mary—John Throkmorton and Henry Porter returned—Alteration in time for choosing Mayor—Thomas Wheatley and Bablake School—Third Parliament of Philip and Mary—John Throkmorton and John Tallons, Members—Account of the latter—His outcry against Mr. Hales—The Coventry Tithes Act—Death of the Queen.

NORTHUMBERLAND caused Lady Jane Grey to be proclaimed on the 10th July, and being popular at Coventry through his grant of the Park, immediately sent to the Magistrates directing them to make public announcement thereof. The Mayor, however, received counter orders to proclaim Queen Mary, and in the difficulty consulted Recorder Saunders, who happened to be in the City, when, acting under his advice, he refused the Duke's wishes, and boldly proclaimed the latter. Meanwhile, Dudley, discouraged by the indifference of the people, returned to Cambridge, where, on the 20th, he acted the double part of proclaiming Mary as Queen. His seizure, trial, and attainder for high treason were followed by his execution on Tower Hill on the 22nd of August following, whereupon the Manor of Cheylesmore reverted to the Crown.

Mary was crowned at Westminster 1st of October, 1553. She did not forget the opportune loyalty of Recorder Saunders, who was promoted to a Judgeship of Common Pleas. The same year he sat as a Commissioner upon the trials of Lady Jane Grey, Archbishop Cranmer, and the Lords Guilford, Ambrose, and Henry, Dudley, and for the time turned to the old faith, acting from policy rather than from conviction,

and reconciling his conscience thereto. Mr. Saunders sat for the newly-enfranchised borough of Saltash, and, with Sir Thomas White and others, acted on the trial of Sir Nicholas Throkemorton, whom they were bound to acquit upon evidence.

It soon became apparent that the Queen had determined to change the new for the old religion, and tumults in London, Coventry, and other towns caused trouble to her Council. On the 26th of August they directed the Mayor of Coventry, by letter, to apprehend the Rev. Hugh Symonds, Vicar of St. Michael's, who had spoken somewhat hastily in a sermon about the Queen's proceedings. He was examined, and sent to the Council to be dealt with. At the same time a Commission to punish any person for preaching against the Queen was sent to the Mayor and his Brethren. Symonds was to be set at liberty if he would recant his sermon, but on refusal the Magistrates were to stay his Protestant tendencies; and shortly after complaint was laid that he was married, whereupon Dr. Richard Samson, the new Roman Catholic Bishop of the Diocese, deprived him of the living. For four years and a half no Vicar was appointed, as the emoluments were small, and the few Romish Priests qualified, obtained better appointments. The Magistrates were ordered to put down all Protestant assemblies, but notwithstanding, there was a small congregation who held secret meetings in the fields without the Town, until the coming of Elizabeth.

The Queen's first Parliament met at Westminster on the 5th October, and instructions were given that only persons favourable to the Romish faith should be returned. The Magistrates in various Cities and Counties were ordered to be changed if suspected, and known Protestants were not allowed to take part in the elections. Many Sheriffs, in their devotion to the Court, when other means failed, falsified the returns, and sent persons suitable for the Queen's purpose. Members were still chosen by view or voice, and not by polls. On the 11th September the return was made of

JOHN NETHERMYLL AND THOMAS BONDE.

The families of both had been long resident in the City. The former was the son of Mr. Julius Nethermyll, a wealthy Draper, who had possessions in Warwickshire; notably the Manor of Exhall, and the Clodshale Chantry property in Birmingham. In 1548 he was Sheriff of Coventry, and became Mayor in 1557. In an entry connected with the Drapers' Chapel at St. Michael's, it is said that "Mr. Nethermyll owed the Drapers' Company for a pare of orgaynes, iiij^{li} [\pounds 3]," and he is represented with his parents on the Nethermyll tomb in that Church. His family were of the Roman faith, and in 1535 a Richard Nethermyll was the Vicar of St. Michael's. Mr. Bonde was the member of the Drapers' Company alluded to in the last Chapter, and it is strange to find him representing the City immediately after the Authorities had gained their case against him.

In Parliament all Acts in favour of the Reformation made during King Edward's reign were repealed, but great opposition being made in the Commons to the proposed

marriage with Philip of Spain, the Members were dismissed, and Parliament was dissolved after sitting but two months, on the 5th December, 1553.

In January, 1554, several rebellions occurred against the Queen's match with King Philip. The most dangerous of these were those of Sir Thomas Wyatt and Henry Grey, Duke of Suffolk. In the first Lord Mayor White distinguished himself by preparing to repel the rebels. On the 29th January the Duke caused Wyatt's proclamation to be read at Leicester, avowing to the Mayor of that Borough that no harm was intended to the Queen, but few persons assembled to hear it. Intending to proceed to Coventry, he sent his agents, Kampton and Burdett, to prepare the way and get his friends to open the Town gates, but the former, who was his Secretary, made a mistake in addressing the first person he met, a Mr. Anthony Corbyt, who, although an old friend, returned a cold answer. Messrs. Aslyn and Francis promised assistance upon the understanding that the Duke's object was to oppose the arrival of the Spanish strangers, but others less cautious welcomed Suffolk's coming, declaring that "the whole Town was his and at his commandment, unless it were certain of the Counsaile of the Town," who "feared that if the good-fellows got the upper hand, their extremities heretofore should be remembered." Other townsmen joined the conversation, amongst them being Messrs. Glover and Clerk, who had just arrived from London, and it was proposed to promptly seize the City, with the Castles of Warwick and Kenilworth. The emissaries were taken to a house and presented to a person of some importance, who said : "The Lord's quarrel is right well known ; let him come, and make no stay, for this Town is his own." Kampton was urged to return at once to the Duke, in order to hasten his arrival, whilst they themselves resolved to read the proclamation from the Market Place, and raise the people. It was evening, and Kampton after his twenty-four miles' ride from Leicester, was weary, and desired to wait until morning. If a rising was commenced in the darkness, it was feared that considerable damage would result to many rich men, and with such deeds the Duke's Secretary would have nothing whatever to do. The Magistrates that could be consulted refused to entertain the project. Kampton had sent a messenger to one Hudson of Warwick, with instructions to arrange matters there, but he now returned with the news that Hudson had been seized by the Earl of Huntingdon, who had proclaimed Suffolk a traitor ; upon which the emissary left Coventry hurriedly, telling his friends he was going to the Duke, to hasten his coming. During the night the Town was greatly disturbed, a cry arose that the City was being fired in four places, whereupon the common bell was rung, and the Authorities ordered the gates to be closed and the walls manned. On the 30th, Suffolk and his followers proceeded towards Coventry, but were met by Burdett, who informed them that the Town gates were shut against their arrival. Seeing that his efforts were hopeless, the Duke dismissed his followers, and hastened privately to his estate at Astley, a few miles from Coventry ; where, until such time as he could escape out of England, he sought

refuge in the cottage of Underwood his keeper. Meanwhile, Huntingdon, with the Queen's forces, came to Coventry, and some armour was taken; Suffolk's hiding-place was made known to the Earl by his servant, and a party of troopers effected his arrest. He was brought to Coventry and confined in Mr. Warren's house, whilst Mr. Throkmorton rode post to London to acquaint the Queen of his capture. The Earl brought his prisoner to the Tower of London, where the Duke, Lady Jane, and her husband, were beheaded; whilst Kampton was sentenced to be brought to Coventry, "there to be arraigned and suffer death."

Soon after this religious persecutions were commenced. Mr. Richard Hopkins, chosen Sheriff in 1554, a Protestant much respected in the Town, was taken and confined in the Fleet Prison at London, on a charge of heresy. His friends petitioned the Court for his release, and obtained it, but Mr. Hopkins fled to the Continent, where he remained until Queen Mary's death. He lived at Basle, in Switzerland, with his wife and eight children, doing much good amongst the poor Protestant refugees there. At this time William Bennet, Vicar of Trinity, was removed for being married.

A new Parliament was summoned to assemble at Oxford, and by fresh writs, at Westminster, 2nd April, 1554. Again Court influence favourable to the Queen's designs was used, foreign gold prepared the way for her marriage with Philip of Spain, and Parliament was made subservient to Royal commands. Coventry returned

THOMAS KYVET AND EDWARD DAMPERT.

Alderman Thomas Kyvet was a member of the Sheerman's Company, and had been Mayor in 1547. Edward "Dampert," or Davenport, was a pewterer. The family of Davenport settled in Coventry about 1500. Christopher Davenport, his father, married Emma, daughter of William Blunt, of Burton-on-Trent; and he, a daughter of John Harford, Alderman of Coventry. In 1534 he was elected City Chamberlain, in 1540 Sheriff, and Mayor in 1550. This Parliament was short. It passed an Act relating to the Queen's marriage with Philip, but it was dissolved on the 5th of May following. The Queen granted confirmatory Letters Patent to the Mayor, Bailiffs, and Commonalty of Coventry, at Farnham, on the 26th June, prior to her marriage on the 25th July.

In 1554 Edward Saunders was knighted. He soon retired from the Recordership of Coventry, and was succeeded by his kinsman, Mr. John Throkmorton. Sir Edward succeeded Sir William Portmore, Knight, as Chief Justice of the Queen's Bench in May, 1556; and was reappointed to that office by Queen Elizabeth, but having a dispute with the Judge of the Court of Admiralty, he was in 1559 removed to the less dignified position of Chief Baron of the Exchequer; in which office he, with other Judges, gave decree for £6 (part of £14 given by Queen Elizabeth out of the £80 fee-farm rent she received from Coventry, to the Vicar of Holy Trinity for his better maintenance) to be given for the support of the Vicar of St. Michael's. In 1558 the Manors of Weston-sub-Wetherley, Warwickshire, and Newbold, Northamptonshire, were granted by

the Crown, in moieties, to Sir Edward Saunders and Francis Morgan. Lady Saunders died 11th October, 1563, and was buried in the north aisle of Weston Church, where, on a brass plate, are some curious Latin verses, composed by the Chief Justice, which have been rendered into English thus :—

"Here Margerie Saunders lyeth, whose mortal limbs are dead,
But to enjoy immortal rest her soul to Heaven is fled.
While life did last, she was a pattern of good life,
Devout to God, good to the poor, a chaste and perfect wife.
A housewife of great skill, setting her whole delight
In her just love and wedded mate, Sir Edward Saunders, Knight.
For Christ, His Cross, she called amidst the thrilling pangs of death,
Which she in mind herself beheld until her latest breath.
And so gave up her ghost to God, Whom life did lend,
Who for her good and worth did give to her a happy end."

Sir Edward died 12th November, 1576, and was buried at Weston Church, where there is a small but mutilated monument, with damaged figures of the Chief Justice and his wife remaining. Amongst the Corporation manuscripts there remains a deed of petition between Sir Edward Saunders and the Aldermen, of lands in Fillongley, Corley, and Meriden, dated about 1555-7.

Their united Majesties called a new Parliament to assemble at Westminster on the 11th November, 1554, and the Sheriffs were instructed by letters from the Queen to choose Members "of the wise, grave, and Catholic sort," and declaring her intention not to have the possessions of those who held lands of the dissolved Monasteries interfered with. Coventry returned its Recorder and senior Alderman,

JOHN THROKMORTON AND JOHN HARFORD,

on the 6th November.

John Throkmorton, like his brother Sir Nicholas Throkmorton, had been implicated as an accomplice in Wyatt's rebellion. Juries were biased by the Crown, and the historian Rapin, relates that he was condemned upon the same evidence which his brother had been acquitted, but if so, he must have received pardon with other prisoners at the time of the Queen's marriage. He was the son of Sir¹ George Throkmorton, of Coughton, by Catherine, daughter of Nicholas, Baron Vaux. His brother, Sir Robert, lived at Coughton Court, and he at Feckenham. He was a lawyer of considerable repute. Old Sir Robert Townsend, who had held the office of Justice of Chester through the last two reigns, being too much of a Protestant to please Her Majesty; he was quickly removed from office, and Mr. John Throkmorton appointed. But Sir John was no bigot, and transferred his devotions for policy (if only outwardly) to suit the times, as many other noblemen and gentlemen were doing. In 1552 he had sat for Warwick borough, and subsequently was chosen as Recorder for Worcester. He was also made Master of Requests, and Vice-President of the Council of the Marches. John Harford, or Hareford, was a tanner. Chosen Mayor of Coventry in 1545, he

was two years after appointed a Commissioner to ascertain the true annual value of the Vicarage of Holy Trinity.

In this Parliament all Statutes against the Pope's authority were repealed ; but the purchase of the Abbey lands was confirmed, whilst the persecuting statutes of former Kings' reigns were revived. During its sitting a considerable number of Members, disliking the proceedings, left their seats ; especially on the signing of the Spanish Convention ; amongst them being John Harford, the Coventry Burgess ; William Wigston, of Wolston, Member for Warwickshire ; and Ralph Brown, of Woodlows, Burgess of Warwick. They were impeached by the House, but having precedent for their secession, were not subjected to fine and imprisonment.

Coventry was now to be the scene of martyrdom of various persons. Lawrence Saunders, the brother of Sir Edward Saunders, in preaching at his Church, All Hallows', Bread Street, London, and elsewhere, had spoken against the re-introduction of the Mass, and generally opposed the revival of the old faith, for which he was committed by Bonner, Bishop of London, to the Marshalsea. Sir Edward wrote exhorting his brother earnestly to make his conscience amenable thereto, and he also interceded on his behalf ; but when before the Queen's Council, Lawrence was stubborn, and adhered to his sayings ; whereupon Bonner degraded him from the Ministry ; and on the 5th the Sheriffs of London delivered the worthy to the Queen's guard, who took him to Coventry to be burnt at the stake. He was lodged in the common gaol, and on the 8th, led to the place of execution in the Park, and suffered. On the 19th September following, Robert Glover, of Mancetter, and Cornelius Bongey, of Coventry, were burnt at the same spot. John Careless, a weaver of the Town, died in the King's Bench prison, and Julius Palmer, some time master of Reading Grammar School, whose father had been Mayor of Coventry, was burnt at Newbury in July, 1556.

The Assembly, which was sitting at the death of Lord Chancellor Gardiner, was dissolved by the Queen's order, and a new Parliament met at Westminster 21st October, 1555.

JOHN THROKMORTON AND HENRY PORTER

were then returned for Coventry.

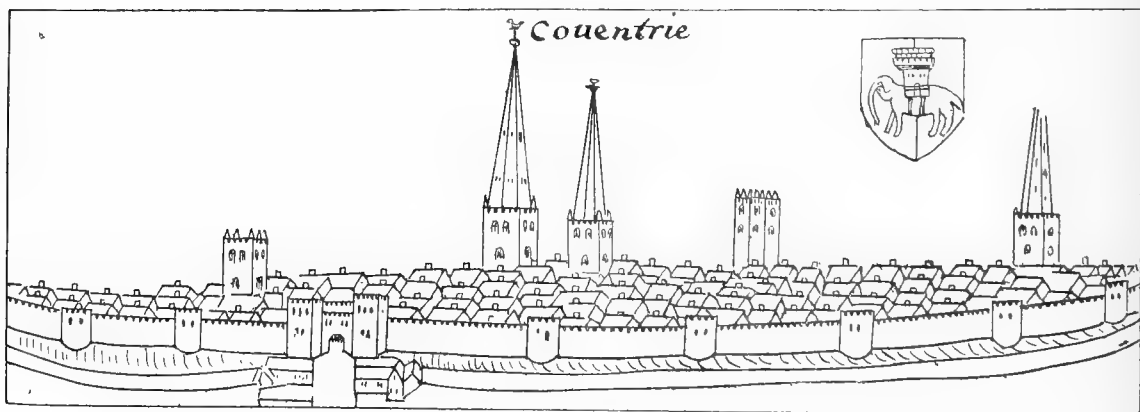
Up to the year 1556 the Mayor of Coventry was chosen at Candlemas Day (2nd February), but that year the Chief Magistrate, Robert Colman, continued in office only until All Saints' Day (1st November), when Thomas Wheatley was chosen, and the custom was continued afterwards. Mr. Wheatley was a principal founder of the Bablake School.

To the next Parliament, summoned 20th January, 1557, the Burgesses returned were

JOHN THROKMORTON AND JOHN TALLONS.

The former is called "Esquire" in the return to Parliament, and the latter

"Gentleman," indicating the distinction between the son of a Knight or County Squire, and an Alderman of the City. John Tallons, or Tallants, was Mayor in 1544 and 1562, and was by trade a goldsmith. He had to do with the purchase of the tithes from Queen Elizabeth, and, with Alderman Kervyn, raised a considerable commotion against Mr. Hales, by setting forth that the latter had received certain houses and lands from King Henry, which he retained unjustly for his own uses, and which they declared were designed by the King for the foundation of a Grammar School. As Mr. Hales was abroad, the matter rested for the time. Mr. Tallons died 1563, and by will gave his house at Foleshill to the Churchwardens of Trinity parish for the preaching of sermons in both Coventry parishes; he also left money for the purpose of loans to poor occupiers. The incomes of the Vicars of the two parishes were small, as their livelihood "stood and depended upon the devotion of ye citizens and inhabitants," and an Act was obtained, at the desire of certain persons in the City, entitled "An Act for the payment of tithes in the City of Coventry," which gave the Vicar a tax upon property in the Town and suburbs.



COVENTRY, FROM W. SMITH'S DESCRIPTION OF ENGLAND, 1588.

CHAPTER XII.

THE EARLY YEARS OF GOOD QUEEN BESS: ESTABLISHING THE CHURCH.

Elizabeth (1558 to 1572).

Elizabeth's first Parliament—Thomas Dudley and Richard Grafton returned—Re-establishing the English Church—Putting away Popery—Civil privileges confirmed—A second Parliament—Thomas Dudley and Richard Grafton again chosen—Account of them—Purchase of the tithes—The Queen's visit—The Mayor's happy allusion—The Recorder's oration—Queen knights the Recorder—Complaint against Mr. Hales found frivolous—He continues the Free School—Mr. Wheatley's gift to Bablake, etc.—Parliament desires Queen's marriage, and is dissolved—Mr. Hales and his pamphlet—City obtains the Park—Mary Queen of Scots a prisoner at Coventry—The Mayor disgraced—Another Parliament—Edmund Brownell and Henry Goodere chosen—Account of them—Actions and speeches of the latter in Parliament—Bill affecting and improving local trade—Act for validity of Burgesses non-resident—Death of Mr. Hales—His gift to City.



QUEEN ELIZABETH was crowned 15th January, 1559, to the great joy of her Protestant subjects and the misgivings of the Papists. A new Parliament was summoned on the 23rd, to which the returns for Coventry are lost, but a less authentic authority has it that

THOMAS DUDLEY AND RICHARD GRAFTON

were returned, and there is no record of Mr. John Throkmorton having sat in Elizabeth's Parliaments. The Queen's first desire was for a religious settlement to free the English Church from Rome. Another revolution took place, Popes and Cardinals were banished, the Revised Prayer Book and a new English Liturgy were introduced, and care was taken that Parliament should be Protestant rather than Papist. The Royal Supremacy over the English Church was restored, uniformity of worship enacted, and the Queen empowered to appoint Bishops. Bayn, Bishop of Coventry, was removed, and Bentham succeeded; but few of the clergy were deprived, as they took the Supremacy Oath; whilst most of the nobility, gentry, and people quickly returned to the reforming party. The City annals record that "good ministers were this year sent to Coventry," and the Mayor, by Act of Leet, levied a tax for their maintenance, evidently in accordance with the Act of 1558. Mass was put down, images and relics were broken or burnt in the streets, and all Popish trappings removed or disposed of out of the Churches. This Parliament was dissolved on the 8th May, 1559. The Queen, by Letters Patent, in February, 1560, confirmed to the Mayor, etc., of

Coventry certain privileges contained in former Charters, and seven years after gave the City exclusive right to make a special kind of cloth then in fashion.

No Parliament was again called until the 11th January, 1562-3, but the want of money to carry on a war with France necessitated one. The Citizens were again

THOMAS DUDLEY AND RICHARD GRAFTON.

Thomas Dudley was a member of the Drapers' Company; he was Sheriff in 1554, and Mayor in 1558. He had interested himself on behalf of the martyr Robert Glover in 1555, and is mentioned in a Stratford document of Mary's reign as suspected of Protestantism. Thomas Dudley sat for Warwick in 1572, and it is not impossible that the Coventry Member was in some way related to Sir Robert Dudley, afterwards Earl of Leicester, whose political enemies described him as "the son of a Duke (Northumberland), the brother of a King (Guilford Dudley, married to Queen Jane), the grandson of an Esquire (Dudley, hung with his co-extortioner Empson), and the great grandson of a carpenter, who was the only honest man in the family, and the only one who died in his bed." However this may be, the Coventry merchant was of the same political school as his great namesake, and in or about 1561-3 they both had a hand in obtaining certain tithes for the City. Mr. Dudley was paid £186 14s. 4d., to effect the purchase, and the Earl of Leicester received £20 as a present. By his will in 1581, he left money to the Bablake Boys' Hospital, and for the relief of his own Ward (Gosford Street), in payment of a fifteenth, when chargeable; which in the next year his widow, Alice, made payment of. Of Richard Grafton little is known, he was apparently a townsman and a printer, and received the sum of £6 13s. 4d. for his services in attending Parliament.

Queen Elizabeth visited Coventry on the 17th August, 1565, and was splendidly entertained by the Mayor and Citizens. The Recorder addressed her Majesty in a brilliant oration, and the Mayor (Mr. Edmund Brownell) delivered up the Mace into her hands. The Recorder then presented a purse of gold to the Queen, who said, "It is a good gift, I have but few such, for it is a hundred pounds in gold," whereto the Mayor replied pleasantly, "If it please your Grace, there is a great deal more in it." "What is that?" said her Majesty. To which his Worship replied, "The hearts of all your loving subjects." "We thank you, Mr. Mayor," was the Queen's reply, "it is a great deal more indeed." Her Majesty honoured Mr. Hales with her company, sleeping two evenings at the Friars, and on Sunday the Mayor and the Council dined there with her. The next day, when the Queen left the City for Kenilworth, the Mayor received the Mace again, and the day following his Worship and the Aldermen were entertained there. She knighted the Recorder, and would have done the like to the Mayor, had he possessed sufficient estate to have sustained the honour.

Some members of the Corporation and Mr. Hales did not agree, and a part of the Recorder's oration complaining that King Henry had intended to found a Free School or College, and that certain lands of great value meant for the establishing of the same, were unjustly withheld from the City, had somewhat marred the pleasure of the Royal visit. The Queen, incensed at the charge, ordered her Secretary of State, Sir William Cecil, to enquire into it, but no such grant of lands was found to have been made. Still Mr. Hales kept the School during his life, first at the White Friars' Church, until the Corporation claimed the edifice, when he removed it to the Hospital of St. John. It was at this time that Alderman Wheatley gave certain lands to the Mayor, etc., for the maintenance of poor children at Bablake. He also left between £800 to £1,000 to the different Companies to be let out on loan.

Parliament desired that Elizabeth should marry, but the Queen considered it was interfering with her rights, and after many prorogations the Assembly dissolved on the 2nd January, 1566-7. The question, now that Mary Queen of Scots was married to Lord Darnley, and had a son (afterwards James I.) born, was of vital importance to Protestants, and was warmly taken up. Pamphlets were published supporting candidates for the succession. One issued under the name of John Hales showed the work of a zealous partizan, and strongly favoured the House of Suffolk. It disparaged the Stuart line as inconsistent with the religion and independence of England, and at the same time asked Parliament to declare the true heir to the Throne. The Spanish Ambassador complained, and the Queen ordered Mr. Hales to be examined. He was arrested at Coventry, and sent to the Tower of London. Cecil enquired into the matter, and found that he was not the real author, but that the book was written by the Lord Keeper, Sir Nicholas Bacon, Mr. Hales' chief in the Court of Chancery, and Cecil's own brother-in-law. Mr. Hales was imprisoned for half a year, and Sir Nicholas ordered to confine himself solely to his duties.

By the aid of the Earl of Leicester, the Mayor, etc., obtained a grant from the Queen to hold Cheylesmore and the Park "for ever in fee-farm," subject to stipulations and £9 per annum reserved rent.

The Houses had been occupied with considerable discussion respecting Mary Queen of Scots, which had extended over a considerable period. Her flight into England in 1568 placed the Government in a dilemma. The Queen was sent to Tutbury, but Catholic risings in the north required her removal, and in November, 1569, she was taken under the care of the Earls of Huntingdon and Shrewsbury to Coventry, arriving there on or about the 30th. They lodged the Princess at the Black Bull Inn, in Smithford Street, and Huntingdon informed Elizabeth that the citizens were loyal, and that he had four hundred soldiers; Shrewsbury also wrote to Cecil, adding that they "will keep her out of sight, for the more she is seen the greater is the danger," and suggested that Nottingham Castle was a much safer place, as the Inn was found

inconvenient, and both Mary and Huntingdon complained of wanting "stuff" or provisions. The Queen remained about a month, and, when the insurrection was put down, was taken back to Tutbury on 24th December.

Mr. John Harford, Mayor in 1569, and a late Burgess, when walking without the Town, having a couple of greyhounds following him, met Mr. William Heley, an embroiderer, and his wife, who were accompanied by a spaniel dog; which the greyhounds ran at, and Heley protecting, beat off. The Mayor, offended, immediately struck him such a violent blow with a stick that he died within a fortnight. For the mischance, the Mayor was deprived of his office by the Queen, and a new Chief Magistrate ordered to be chosen. He was expelled the Council, and compromised with Heley's wife for pardon.

Queen Elizabeth now summoned a Parliament to meet at Westminster upon the 2nd April, 1571, but no list of members is given in the Parliamentary returns; both Dr. Thomas, and Browne Willis, however, give the Burgesses returned for Coventry as

EDMUND BROWNELL, GENT., AND HENRY GOODERE, ESQ.

Mr. Edmund Brownell was a clothier. He was Sheriff in 1557, and Mayor in 1565.

Mr. Henry Goodere, afterwards Sir Henry Goodere, Knight, was descended from Francis Goodere, of London, and came of a wealthy Herefordshire family. He had a residence at Polesworth, and considerable property at Baginton, the latter just without the boundary of the County of Coventry. Sir William Dugdale says he was "a gentleman much accomplished and of eminent note in this Countie whilst he lived, having suffered imprisonment on behalf of that magnanimous ladie, Marie Queen of Scots, of whom he was a great honorer." He had some hand in Norfolk's marriage scheme with that Queen, for at the trial in 1571, he made confession of what he knew of the matter; and ten years later, when one Summerfield was examined with regard to his dealings with "Harry Goodere, of Coventre" (then a prisoner), it was stated "that Queen Mary gave Goodere the buttons of gold which he wore on his cap and doublet as a keepsake." But after Mary's death Elizabeth restored him to favour, and he was knighted. Sir Henry was the friend of Sir Philip Sidney, Sir Fulk Greville, Sir George Digby, and other men of literary genius; and the former, when dying, in 1586, adds by way of codicil to his will: "I give to my good friends Sir George Digby and Sir Henry Goodere each a ring of —." But the writing breaks off, for the dictation was stayed by death. He introduced the poet, Michael Drayton, who was born near Polesworth, to the Haringtons of Combe. Goodere and Drayton were school boys together, and the Member maintained the poet whilst at Oxford. In after years Drayton wrote the following in an ode to his patron:—

"These lyric verses, short and few,
 Most worthy Sir, I send to you,
 To read them be not weary;
 They may become John Hew's his lyre,
 Which oft at Polesworth by the fire
 Has made us gravely merry."

Amongst Goodere's *protégés* and friends were Donne and Ben Johnson. He is said to have introduced Shakespeare (the "Will, my Lord of Lester's jesting plaier," mentioned in Sir Philip's correspondence with Walsingham,) to Sir Philip Sidney. Dr. Donne says:—

"When I would know thee, Goodere, my thought looks
 Upon thy well-made choice of friends, and books;
 Then do I love thee, and behold thy ends,
 In making thy friends books, and thy books friends;
 Now I must give, and deed, the voice
 Attending such a study, such a choice;
 When, though it be love that to thy praise doth move,
 It was a knowledge that begat thy love."

Mr. Goodere sat for Stafford from 1562 to 1567. In 1570 he was appointed Sheriff of Warwickshire, and the next year returned for Coventry, when he was appointed on a Committee to enquire into the abuses of religion, and being a great debater, several of his speeches remain. A chief cause for calling Parliament together had been that a subsidy might be granted to the Queen, and Mr. Newdigate gallantly moved for one to be offered to her Majesty before it was required, a course distasteful to many, who complained of excessive expenditure, abuses, and burdens. Mr. Goodere, desiring to gain favour at Court, said "that every man ought to yield to subsidy, and rather offer it, than stay until the Queen demanded it," declaring that the complaints made were more than in one Parliament could be remedied.

In 1570 the Pope excommunicated Elizabeth. Parliament retaliated by enacting repressive measures against the Catholics, the National Church was set up as the standard of religion, and Puritan and Papist alike required to conform most rigidly to its teachings.

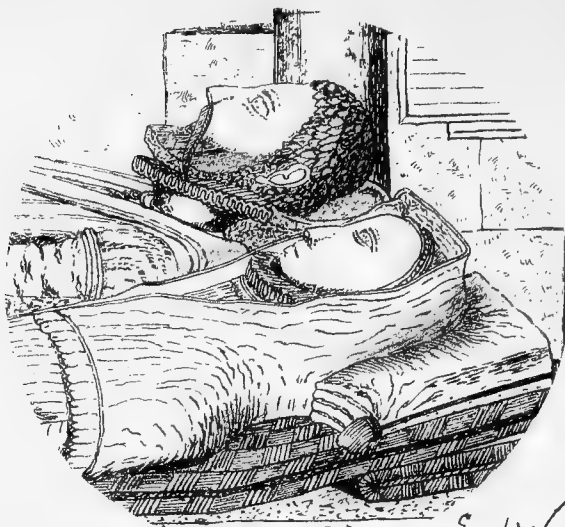
A Bill, demanding compulsory attendance at Church, and for making certain offences treason, caused much debate in Parliament. The law required that the Service should be said, and Sacraments administered, according to the Book of Common Prayer, and persons not attending Church were subject to fine. Yet innovations were often made, and the prescribed form was not strictly carried out. In the debate, Mr. Aglionby, the Member for Warwick, desired the law might not exempt any gentleman's private oratories; and Mr. Goodere, in a lengthy speech, first asserting his loyalty to the Queen, the State, and the House, learnedly discoursed upon three points: "What he thought of the persons there assembled, what he disliked in the matter of the Bill propounded, and why he did so." Of the persons assembled he believed the whole to have a hearty well-wishing for her Majesty's safety, and he had

faith in the sincerity of some of the most honourable, but others were doubly disposed, and had favourable affection for some special object. As to the Bill itself he approved of it, unless indeed, former laws had not already provided for its contents. He thought if any person should say "that the Papists do not err in speaking slanderously of her Majesty, the same should be taken as treason," but as for the additions to the Bill, added, to make treason of a fault which had been committed in times past, he considered would be a very dangerous and perilous precedent to set, and might occasion such great evils as could not be easily conceived, for he thought considerable troubles would arise from it; none could warrant that its workings would be for good, and as the Queen's pleasure was unknown, he urged stay; and further noticing that the pennings of the early parts of the additions were clouded and involved with secret understandings, he condemned such obscurity of the sense, since truth should be clear, honest, and open. Sir Thomas Smith, her Majesty's Secretary, seeing Mr. Goodere's speech had moved the House, suggested that the Bill and the additions might be separated, and eventually the matter was referred to a Committee, upon which Mr. Goodere was chosen.

The effects of bad trade were universally felt. Parliament passed an Act to enforce the wearing of woollen caps, which affected Coventry. Still, people chose their own headgear, and the Queen issued proclamation to enforce the Statute. To further alleviate matters, a Bill was introduced to establish "banks for the relief of common necessity," which lent money on pledge at a fixed rate of interest. London, Coventry, and five other Cities participated in this Act.

Various boroughs, not having fit Burgesses to represent them, had chosen Members from the new aristocracy instead, and Coventry now had one such Member. "An Act for the validity of Burgesses non-resident" was introduced, the intention being, not that townsmen should be excluded the premier right of being chosen, but that the choice might be extended "to borderers and near neighbours at the least." Some Members considered that one Burgess should be chosen for each borough, with liberty to choose whom they pleased in the other seat, a method sometimes adopted at Coventry. The introduction of outside candidates led to bribery at elections. This Parliament was dissolved 30th May, 1571.

Mr. John Hales died 5th January, 1572, and was buried at St. Peter's Church, Broad Street, London. He left the Mayor, etc., of Coventry certain properties for the maintenance of a Free School in the Town.



the last of September. 1577

yo^e honored loving friend
John Throckmorton

SIR JOHN THROKMORTON, KNT., of Feckhenham; Justice of Chester, etc.; and MARGERIE his wife.
(Sketched by the Author from their tomb in Coughton Church.)

Sir John was Recorder of, and Member for, Coventry in 1554, and died 1580.



John Harington

SIR JOHN HARINGTON, KNT.,
Recorder and Member for Coventry,
Created Baron Harington of Exton,
DIED, 1613.

(From a rare print, made from the original painting by
Imae Oliver.)



John Harington

SIR JOHN HARINGTON, KNT
Recorder of Coventry,
Second Baron Harington of Exton,
DIED, 1614.


(From a rare print, signed "Hen. Balaam, excudit
R. Elstrack, sculptit.")

CHAPTER XIII.

ELIZABETH'S LATTER PARLIAMENTS, THE COMPANIES AND THE COMMONALTY.

Elizabeth, continued (1572 to 1603).

Edmund Brownell and Thomas Wright (or Wight) returned—Death of former—Bartholomew Tate chosen—Account of him—Queen at Kenilworth—Free School—Death of Recorder Throkmorton—Further particulars of him—Edward Aglionby chosen Recorder—The Queen's pleasantry to him at Warwick—Parliament dissolved—Edward Boughton and Thomas Wight returned—Account of the latter—Another Parliament—Thomas Saunders and Henry Breeres representatives—Their story—Payments for attendances—Thomas Saunders and Henry Breeres again returned—The Armada—Death of the Earl of Leicester—Sir John Harington chosen Recorder—His Biography—The Puritans—Their printing press—Set up in Coventry—Removed—Seized at Manchester—Troubles of Mr. Hales—A Puritan Vicar—Another Parliament summoned—Thomas Saunders and John Myles—Account of the latter—A Bill affecting a local trade—The members in Committee—Another Parliament—Thomas Saunders and Henry Kervyn returned—Account of the latter—The members in debate and on Committee—Visit of Earl Essex—Increased power of the Council House—Contentions at choice of Mayor—Elizabeth's last Parliament—Thomas Saunders and Henry Breeres returned—Acts passed for relief of poor, and for masters and apprentices—The Freemen and their rights—Parliament dissolved—Death of the Queen.

T was not long before another Parliament was summoned, which met at Westminster 8th of May, 1572, and sat for nearly eleven years. Coventry returned

EDMUND BROWNELL AND THOMAS WRIGHT,

so says the Parliamentary return, but the latter is probably mis-written for Wight (as in the return for the next Parliament), for Thomas Wight was this year Mayor of Coventry. During the sittings Mr. Brownell died, and

BARTHOLOMEW TATE, ESQ.,

succeeded him. The family of Tate was an old one in the City, and in 1496, John, son of Thomas Tate, of Coventry, was Lord Mayor of London. This Member at one time lived at Whitley, where he held lands, as also at Stivichall and Stretton-on-Dunsmore. He was a trustee under Mr. Thomas Dudley's will, and in 1594 there is an agreement between him (then living at De la Pyre, Northamptonshire,) and the Mayor, etc., of Coventry, respecting lands and tithes at Stivichall.

During the Queen's visit to Kenilworth, the old play of Hock Tuesday was performed by Coventry men.

"An Act" was obtained in 1580 "for the perfecting of assurances of certain lands towards the maintenance of a Free Grammar School," by which the late Mr. Hales' gift was secured to the Town; and on the 24th of February, the Commons Journals state that "the Bill touching the Mayor, Bailiffs, and Commonalty of the City of Coventry, was brought in by Mr. Thomas Grymselitch (Newcastle-under-Lyne), which, with amendments, was agreed upon by all parties to the said Bill."

Sir John Throckmorton died on the 22nd May, 1580, and was buried in the chancel of Coughton Church, where he and his wife, Lady Margerie, are represented in marble. Sir John had been removed from the office of Justice of Chester in 1578, through the designs of the Earl of Leicester, who showed considerable hostility to him and his family. His son Francis was detected, however, of having treasonable correspondence with Mary Queen of Scots, and executed. It was at the Earl's house that Sir Nicholas Throckmorton was found dead, whilst Mr. Arden, his brother-in-law, was also by Leicester's influence accused of high treason, found guilty, and suffered.

About the same time Mr. Edward Aglionby, of Balsall, became Recorder. He had in 1558 purchased "Alspath, alias Myridene," from Mr. Christopher Hales, and had other lands at Shortley, Preston Bagot, Wolvey, and elsewhere in Warwickshire. In December, 1569, he conveyed the money for the payment of the army to Berwick. He was elected Recorder of Warwick in the place of Sir William Wigston, whose daughter he had married, and sat in Parliament for that borough. When Elizabeth visited the Earl of Warwick in 1572, Mr. Aglionby's learned oration greatly interested her, and she merrily said to him: "Come hither, little Recorder. It was told me that youe wold be afraid to look upon me, or to speak boldly, but youe were not so afraid of me as I was of youe, and I nowe thank youe for putting me in mynd of my duety." He often spoke in Parliament in the flattering and fluent style of speech peculiar to the time, and was attached to Leicester's party. He resigned the Recordership of Warwick in 1587, through age and failing eyesight.

Parliament being dissolved, a new one assembled on the 23rd November, 1584, to which, on the 27th October,

EDWARD BOUGHTON AND THOMAS WIGHT

were returned. Mr. Boughton, apparently, was of Causton, near Dunchurch, where he held considerable property. In 1580, being chosen Sheriff of Warwickshire by the influence of the Earl of Leicester, he forcibly removed one Richard Steele from the Mastership of Rugby School, and in other cases acted harshly. Like most of the Boughtons, he was fond of plentiful hospitality and fine buildings, and having purchased the materials from the White Friars' Church at Coventry, at this time being demolished, he erected a fine mansion at Causton of singular beauty. Several of his letters are amongst the Coventry MSS.

Again Parliament was dissolved 14th September, 1585, and a new one called for the 15th October, 1586. The proceedings against the Scottish Queen were at this time revived, and she suffered death upon the 8th February, 1587. Coventry, whose population this year was 6,502, now sent

THOMAS SAUNDERS AND HENRY BREERES

to represent it. Mr. Saunders was a grazier, Alderman of Spon Street Ward, and Mayor in 1579. Mr. Breeres was an Alderman of Much Park Street Ward, Sheriff in 1576, and Mayor in 1583. He was a draper, and a benefactor to the Free School library, to the poor of St. Michael's parish, and to the old men and boys at Bablake. The City accounts tell: "1618, October: Mr. Breeres brought into the Council House a fine cloth embroydered with gold, and bestowed it freely upon the Citie, which is properly called a coverpane, and hath 52 buttons of gold with four tassels of gold." Both Aldermen were paid for their attendance in Parliament, receiving for forty-five days £7 10s. each, or three shillings and fourpence per day. At the time a labourer received from fourpence to sixpence, and a carter or artizan from sevenpence to eightpence, daily. Subsequently the City paid Mr. Saunders £7 for forty-two days attendance, and Mr. Breeres £5 6s. 8d. for thirty-two days.

Parliament being dissolved 23rd March, 1587, the Queen summoned one to meet 12th November, 1588, and upon the 22nd October the old members,

THOMAS SAUNDERS AND HENRY BREERES,

were again returned, when they attended fifty-seven days to their duties, and received £9 10s. each for their services. This Assembly closed 29th March, 1589.

The year 1588, saw King Philip's Armada scattered and destroyed. Many of the Council House loyally subscribed to the loan raised for defence, and amongst them Mr. Henry Breeres, £25.

Robert, Earl of Leicester, died 4th September, 1588, and his body was brought to Kenilworth. His various kind deeds to the City were remembered, and the Mayor of Coventry, with his Brethren, Sir John Harington, Mr. Goodere, and other local gentlemen, walked in the funeral procession from thence to St. Mary's Church at Warwick, wherein he was buried.

Sir John Harington, of Combe Abbey, was now chosen Recorder of Coventry, for which he returned thanks in a letter to the Mayor. He was the son of Sir James Harington, and, by his marriage with Anne, heiress of Robert Kelway, came into the possession of Combe, where he erected a mansion, incorporating it with the remains of the cloisters. He became member for Warwickshire in 1586, and in 1601 represented Rutland County. He was "a bountiful housekeeper," dividing his time between Exton and Combe, and he gave twenty-seven volumes to the library at the Coventry Free School.

The Puritans were on the increase, and amongst the chief discontents in the Midlands were Sir Richard Knightley, of Fawsley, and Sir Roger Wigston, of Wolston.

To them the public printing press was closed, but setting up a private one, they secretly distributed many of those libellous tracts called "*Mar Prelate*;" defaming the Church, cavilling at Bishops, religious ceremonies, and points of discipline. From Mousley, in Surrey, their press was removed to Fawsley, and then to Norton. Mr. Knightley's cousin, Mr. Hales, of Coventry, was abroad, and the former obtained permission to use the Friars as a residence for a month's diversion. He brought the press with him, and the printing was done in a back chamber, far removed from the housekeeper's observation. From Coventry the press was removed to Wolston, and thence to Manchester, where the Earl of Derby seized it whilst printing a pamphlet called "*More work for the Cooper.*" The imprisoned printers confessed who were their employers, and the Star Chamber fined Knightley £2,000, Wigston £500, and his wife £100. Mr. Hales was subjected to a fine of 1,000 marks for lending his house, but the Queen reduced it considerably on his innocence being proved.

Since the fall of the Prior and his House, the Vicars of St. Michael's and Holy Trinity were the spiritual heads of the new religion in the Town, being chosen by the Crown. During the Vicariate of Rev. Humphrey Fenn, senior, at Holy Trinity, from 1577 to 1590, the liturgical form of service was superseded by extempore prayer and bible reading. He did not wholly conform, and had been imprisoned before time. Although befriended by the Earl of Leicester, he was cited to appear at Lambeth, and refusing to subscribe to certain articles, was suspended. In 1585, to the "great joy of manie," and by Leicester's influence, he regained the living, but three years after, having attended associations and classes, and refusing to take the oath, was sent to the Fleet Prison, and lost the living. After death, his will was so strongly worded against the hierarchy, and ceremonies, that the Bishops' Court refused to receive it.

For several years there had been no Parliament, but Elizabeth summoned one for the 19th February, 1592, as pressing needs required it, whereupon the City returned

THOMAS SAUNDERS AND JOHN MYLES.

The latter was Alderman of Jordan Well Ward, a member of the Drapers' Company, and had been Mayor in 1580. Sir John Puckering, the Lord Keeper, who lived at Warwick, declared the cause of the summons, whilst the Commons chose the famous lawyer, Sir Edward Coke (who was to be so intimately acquainted with Coventry in the next reign), as their Speaker. In March, a Bill affecting the trade of the City, relating to the manufacture of broadcloths and woollens, was introduced, and the Members for Coventry and Worcester were placed upon the Committee to investigate its clauses, but the Assembly was dissolved on the 10th April following, and no Parliament was summoned until the 24th October, 1597, when, on account of a peace between France and Spain, the Queen apprehensive of disasters, determined to provide the Exchequer with money in readiness, and accordingly, on the 13th September, the City chose for its representatives

THOMAS SAUNDERS AND HENRY KERVYN.

Mr. Kervyn, or Curvin, who in 1567 had served the office of Mayor, was an Alderman of Spon Street Ward, and a mercer. He was the son of Alderman Thomas Kervyn, who died in 1584. The Members took part in debate upon a Bill for restraining excessive malting, sat upon the enquiry Committee thereon, and upon a Committee to consider "the Bill against Forestalling Regrators and Impressors."

When Devereux, Earl of Essex, passed through the City in 1598 to assume military command in Ireland, he was presented with a purse of money.

Since the dissolution of the Monasteries, the civil power of the Council House had increased; the grants made of late, of Monastic and Chantry lands, of Cheylesmore and the Park, together with the noble gifts of White, Bond, Wheatley, and others, had made it autocratic. In 1599 there was great contention between the Commonalty and the Companies as to the choice of Mayor. The former desired Mr. Richard Smith, a vintner, to be chosen, whilst the Masters wished to place Mr. Christopher Davenport, pewterer, into the office; whereupon, when "Mr. Roger Clark, being Mayor and a draper, came from the Jayle to St. Mary's Hall, and would have gone into the Council House," the Commonalty refused to let him, and threatened to thrust His Worship down the Hall stairs if he attempted. Retiring to his own house, he took the sword with him, but the populace seized it on the way, whereupon the Commonalty elected Mr. Smith as Mayor, and "kept out Mr. Dav'nport three choice days longer" (three years out of the office). It is said that "Mr. Smith did little for the goodwill of those that strove for him; Mr. Dav'nport was a good man for the Commonalty."

The Queen summoned her last Parliament to meet 27th October, 1601, and Coventry's choice fell upon

THOMAS SAUNDERS AND HENRY BREERES.

This Assembly passed an Act for the relief of the poor, which originated the poor-law system of England. In 1562 and 1601, Acts relative to masters and apprentices passed into law, and no person was allowed to carry on a craft, mystery, or occupation in England, unless he had served seven years to some trade, under a penalty of fine or imprisonment. This enforced apprenticeship produced good workmen, and strengthened the Freemen of Coventry. No master under twenty-four years of age could take an apprentice, or any apprentice's time expire unless he was of similar age. The Act of Leet of 1535, and the Statutes of 1562 and 1601, were rigorously carried out at Coventry, and householders compelled to become Freemen of the City. As time rolled on the Freemen became a more compact body, asserting the sole right to set up in business, and the choice of the Members of Parliament. They had rights to gifts, to the uses of the Free School for their sons, and the privilege of depasturing their cattle on the Commons and other lands, with divers other favours. The Queen dissolved Parliament 9th December, 1601. She died at Richmond 24th March, 1603.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE GUNPOWDER PLOT: LOYAL CITIZENS AND "THE QUEEN OF HEARTS."

James I. (1603 to 1614).

King visits Exton—The plague—Political opinions—Henry Breeres and John Rogerson elected—The latter resigns—Sir John Harington chosen—Raised to Peerage—John Rogerson again—Receipts of Members—Princess Elizabeth and the Haringtons at Combe—Visits Coventry—Master John Tovey's sermon—Mayor presents Cup—Parliament prorogued—Gunpowder Plot—The Catholic Hunting Match—The Princess in safety at Coventry—Her remarks on the attempt—Loyal Citizens—Proceedings about the Park—Prince Henry created Prince of Wales—Parliament dissolved—The King and the Sacrament—Prince Henry: His visit and death—Marriage of the Princess—Royal largess—Death of John, first Baron Harington—His son John, second Baron Harington—Chosen Recorder—Account of him—His death—Sir Edward Coke, Knight, made Recorder.

JAMES, on his way to London, was loyally entertained by various Lords and gentlemen, especially at Exton, in Rutlandshire, the seat of Sir John Harington. He and his Queen were crowned at Westminster on the 25th July, 1603. Mr. Christopher Davenport, who had at length been chosen Mayor of Coventry, attended by Alderman Rogerson and the other Magistrates, proclaimed James I. at the Cross. This year five hundred persons died of the plague in the Town.

The King's first Parliament met at Westminster 19th March, 1603-4. Political opinion was divided by religious views. In the English Church, the Prelatists or orthodox men, were satisfied with the establishment as it stood, desiring no innovation. The Puritans; who were numerous in London, Coventry, and other towns; objected to certain ceremonies as remnants of Popery; whilst the abolition of Prelacy in Scotland, and the persecution they were subjected to from the English Bishops, extended Presbyterianism. The Catholic party were strong in Warwickshire, but weak in Coventry. During this reign the right of poll at elections came in, and the King, in his proclamation, desired that no bankrupts or outlaws should be chosen, and no one returned unless he paid to the subsidies. On the 20th February, 1603-4, the Parliamentary return shows that

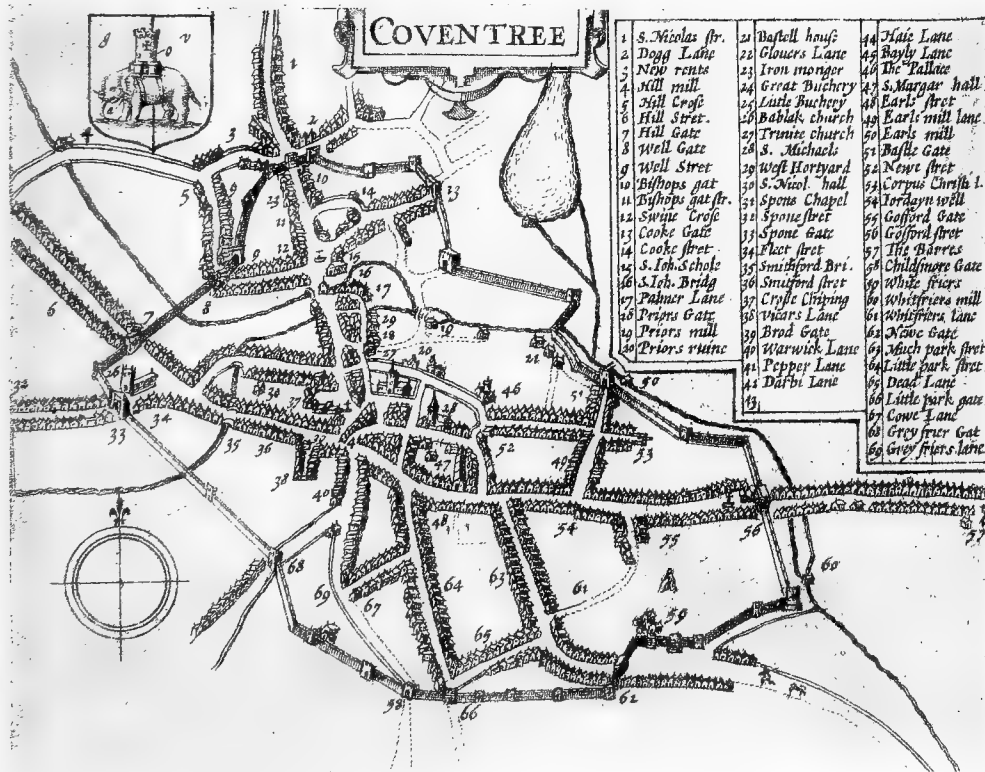
HENRY BREERES AND JOHN ROGERSON

were the Burgesses chosen. Mr. Rogerson was a draper, and an Alderman. He was Sheriff of Coventry in 1578, and Mayor in 1597, and several of his letters remain



Chr: Davenport.

MR. CHRISTOPHER DAVENPORT,
Mayor of Coventry, 1602-3.



THE EARLIEST KNOWN PLAN OF COVENTRY, 1610.

"Described by CHRISTOPHER SAXTON, Augmetr., and published by JOHN SPEEDE, Citizen of London."

amongst the Corporation MSS. The return shows him as "too infirm to attend Parliament," and on 5th March

SIR JOHN HARINGTON, KNT.,

was chosen, but on the 19th he was created Baron Harington, of Exton. The return gives no further election, but from a manuscript list of Members for this Parliament, and from the receipts of payments to the Burgesses in the Corporation documents, it appears that

JOHN ROGERSON

was again elected. These receipts for allowances to Members are as follows :—

"At the Parl^{mt} from the 20th January 1605 until the 21 of March—61 days at v^s a daie—xv^{li} v^s

From the 27 of April 1606 until the 31 of Maye 34 days—viiij^{li} x^s

Sum totalis xxiiij^{li} xv^s."

"The Charges of Mr. John Rogerson at the last session of P^lyment

It^m for xxii weeks. Laking one daie at 5^s a daie wth cometh to xxxiiij^{li}

By me John Rogerson."

"From the 17th November 1606 unto the 20th Dec^r next is just 33 days at 6^s 8^d per diem—xj^{li}

By me Henry Breers."

His Majesty entrusted his eight years' old daughter, the Princess Elizabeth Stuart, to the guardianship of Lord Harington, in order to receive her education with his daughters. His Lordship was a strict Protestant, a courtier not desirous for place; whilst Lady Harington, we are told, "was an unassuming lady, who possessed the modest and noble qualities which adorned the character of a British matron." On the 3rd of April the little Princess visited Coventry with her guardian. The Recorder, with many of the neighbouring nobility and gentry, and the citizens, loyally greeted her. The Mayor and Aldermen, clothed in scarlet robes, with the Burgesses in gowns and hoods, awaited the Princess at Jabet's Ash, and conducted her into the City; and in St. Michael's Church, "good Master John Tovey," who had been appointed tutor to her Royal Highness, preached a sermon, after which she dined at St. Mary's Hall with the Council, "sitting for the first time in a Chair of State," and was presented by the Mayor with a silver-gilt cup, two feet in height, costing £30, with which "she was constrained to accept Lord Harington's aid to sustain the weight, when she took it in her hands, and received the Civic pledge," to the pleasure and amusement of the assembly. After visiting the Grammar School she left the City.

The meeting of this Parliament, after a prorogation, on the 5th November, 1605, will be memorable for the attempt of the Catholic conspirators to blow up the King and Parliament House with gunpowder. Lord Harington, at Combe, had certain information of a proposed attempt to seize the Princess by the local Catholic gentry, who were called together at Dunchurch on the 6th, with the ostensible purpose of joining in a hunting match to be held there. Combe Abbey not being fortified, he promptly moved his charge and family, and sent them under the care of Sir Thomas Holcroft, Knight, to Coventry, who lodged the Princess at the house of Mr. Hopkins, known as the Palace Yard, in the midst of the City. Sir John wrote: "I am not yet recovered from the fever occasioned by the disturbances. I went, with Sir Fulk Greville, to alarm the neighbourhood and surprise the villains who came to Holbeach, and was out five days in peril of death. If their wickedness had taken place, in London some of them say she [the Princess] would have been proclaimed Queen. Her Highness doth often say, 'What a Queen should I have been by this measure!' and, 'I had rather been with my father in the Parliament House than wear his crown on such terms.'" The Citizens, under the command of the Mayor, mounted guard to watch over the Princess, and used armour taken from St. Mary's Hall. We are informed that "the Mayor had one partizant and two halberts therefrom; Mr. Breeres, the Member, had three pikes, one partizant, and two black bills; whilst Mr. Rogerson had three bills, two pikes, and one corslett;" odd implements of warfare doubtless; but no harm came, and when the alarm had subsided, the little Princess returned to Combe to resume her studies, and to admire the pair of fine and fat oxen which the Council House afterwards sent to her.

In 1610 Henry, eldest son of King James, was created Prince of Wales.

In Parliament sturdy opposition arose to the King's will and the encroachments upon the public liberties. The activity of the opposition exasperated His Majesty, who, after six years of almost unrelenting conflict, caused the Assembly to come to a sudden dissolution on the 9th February, 1610.

King James wrote to the Mayor, etc., on the 4th February, 1611, complaining that communicants in the City refused to receive the Sacrament kneeling, and, instead, for the most part, received it standing or sitting. The King directed the Bishop to see the abuse reformed. During the year, Henry, Prince of Wales, visited his estate at Coventry, being entertained at St. Mary's Hall, and receiving a present of £50, but he died in the year following.

Lord Harington was eased of his charge by the marriage of the Princess to Frederic, Elector Palatine, in February, 1613. He received from James the privilege of coining brass farthings, as an acknowledgment of the expense he had been at with Her Highness' education, for the King's slender purse would allow of no other gift. His Lordship accompanied the Princess to Germany, but having caught a cold on his

way home, died on the 24th August at Worms, whereupon the vacant Recordership of Coventry was, says Meridew in his "Catalogue of Warwickshire Prints," filled by his son, Sir John, second Baron Harington, the friend and companion of the late Prince of Wales. This Lord was educated under his father, and the celebrated Master Tovey, at Combe, and at the Grammar School, Coventry, in the strict Protestant teachings of the age. He was afterwards sent to Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, and whilst he imbibed much of the ascetic austerity of James' reign, had great literary ability, allowing himself but five hours sleep daily, the rest being spent in study and devotion. Fuller thus quaintly describes him :—

"John, Lord Harington, was born at Combe Abbey (accruing unto him by his mother, heiress of Kelway), as by a property of that family, lately (or still) surviving, I have on very strict enquiry been certainly informed. He did not count himself privileged from being good, by being great ; and his timely piety rising early, did not soon after go to bed (as some young saints, behold under another notion), but continued watchful during his life. He was one of the first who began the pious fashion (since followed by few of his quality) of a diary, wherein he registered not the injuries of others done to him (a work of revenge, not devotion), but his failings and infirmities towards his Master. Thus making even with the God of Heaven, by repentance in Christ at the end of every day, he had but one day to repent before his death."

Like other young men, he had travelled upon the Continent, and had met, at his father's table, and elsewhere, the most learned men of England. On the print under his portrait he is thus flatteringly described :—

"Rich Ornament, Rare Honor of our clime,
Mirror of Nature, Miracle of Grace,
For all faire Pledges of a Hopeful Prime;
Beyond his Years, before his Rank and Race,
Heroic Pattern for all After Tyme
To imitate, and for our Owne to trace:
Compleat, in Parts of Bodie and of Minde;
Fix't in all Vertue to no Vice inclin'd.

An Humble Noble; an un-wavering Youth;
Un doubting Courtier; Undisparidg'd Knight.
Fearing but God; Loving but Good and Truth;
Shunning but Hell; Seeking but Heav'n, and Right;
Seeming but what he was (O, word of Ruth;)
A Gracious Starr: Now fixt in Glorie Bright.
O Happie Hee! So Happie be The Knot
Of Those deer Neers't to His Love and Lot."

The Harington knot was famous, and its representation is yet to be seen in the Arms upon a mantelpiece at Combe Abbey. Lord John did not long survive his father, but died, unmarried, 27th February, 1614, aged 22, whereupon the title became extinct; and Sir Edward Coke, Knight, was chosen Recorder.

CHAPTER XV.

THE CITY'S GOVERNING CHARTER: A CELEBRATED MEMBER.

James I., continued (1614 to 1625).

Account of Sir Edward Coke, Knt.—His letters—Return of Sir Robert Coke, Knt., and Sampson Hopkins—Biographies—Honorary Freemen—"The Addled Parliament"—Suddenly dissolved—Royal visit—Charles, Prince of Wales—And the Park lease—Sampson Hopkins and Henry Sewall chosen—Account of latter—The Governing Charter of 1621—Its appointments—Great Council of thirty-one—A select body—Ten Wards, and Aldermen—Justices—Murage assessors—A second or Common Council of twenty-five instituted—Fairs—Free Citizenship—Court of Orphans—Coke dismissed from office—Reconciliation—Partly restored in favour—Leads the Opposition—Presents remonstrance—Parliament dissolved—Coke imprisoned—A contest at Coventry—Sir Edward Coke and Henry Harwell chosen—Notice of latter—Sir Thomas Edmonds, the defeated candidate—Account of him—Coke released—The Spanish match broken off—Rejoicings—Sir Edward and the Lord Treasurer's impeachment—His advice to the City Council—Retires—Returns to London—King's death.



WITH the life of Sir Edward Coke volumes could be written. Born at Mileham, in Norfolk, in 1549, he came from a good family. His father, Robert Coke, who died in 1561, was a lawyer of eminence; and his mother, Winifred Knightley, a daughter of William Knightley, Esq., of Norfolk, a branch of the Fawsley family. Educated at Norwich Free School, and Trinity College, Cambridge, he studied the law; was called to the Bar in 1578, and quickly rose to the highest eminence. By his marriage with Bridget, daughter of John Paston, he obtained considerable wealth, and his profession brought in an immense income. Purchasing many estates, he received a gentle reminder from the Crown to desist, but pleaded to be allowed to acquire "one acre more," and thereupon bought the great "Castle Acre" estate in Norfolk, exceeding all his former possessions. By this marriage he became allied to the Rutland, Shrewsbury, Westmoreland, and Abergavenny families. With the influence of Lord Burleigh, he was returned for Aldeburgh in 1588, became Solicitor-General in 1592, was chosen for Norfolk, and elected Speaker of the House. In 1594 he became Attorney-General, and prosecuted, for the Crown, the Earls of Southampton and Essex. Losing his wife in 1598, by whom he had seven sons, he married the rich widow of Sir William Hatton, Knt., daughter of Thomas Cecil, the son of William, Lord Burleigh. It was not a happy union, and whilst Coke became possessed of Stoke Pogis Manor House and vast possessions, Lady Hatton objected to being called plain "Cook," as

she termed his name. He was knighted in 1603, and managed the trial of Sir Walter Raleigh. In 1606 he was appointed Chief Justice of Common Pleas, and in 1613 "Lord Chief Justice of England" and a Privy Councillor. Not only was he elected Recorder of Coventry, but the cities of London and Norwich chose him to fill similar offices. In 1615 he sent a letter to the Mayor, etc., of Coventry, containing an injunction as to players, and in the following year advised the reform of the Council House.

Pressing needs caused the King to call a Parliament on the 5th April, 1614. Rumours were afloat that certain noblemen and others had undertaken to secure a majority in the Commons favourable to the Court's interest, and many country gentlemen came forward to oppose the Burgesses in the Boroughs. Most of the returns to this Parliament are lost, and with them that for Coventry, but from other authorities it appears that

SIR ROBERT COKE, KNT., AND SAMPSON HOPKINS,
were chosen.

Sir Robert was the eldest son of the Recorder, and had married Theophila, only daughter of Thomas Berkley, of Caludon, and grand-daughter of Henry, Lord Berkley. When Mr. Hales removed to his newly-built residence, New House, Keresley, he let "The Friars" to Lord Henry Berkley, who kept a large establishment there with over one hundred servants, but he died in 1613, whereupon George, his grandson, succeeded. The appointment of Sir Edward Coke as Recorder was popular with the Council House, whilst that of his son was still more so, and they presented the Member with the Freedom of their City, a privilege but sparingly bestowed at this period; the known instances being those of Sir John Harington, 1609; Sir Robert Coke, 1613; Sir John Suckling, 1624, and Sir Henry Carey, 1635. Mr. Hopkins was a member of the Drapers' Company, being chosen Sheriff in 1599 and Mayor in 1609.

At the elections nearly all the Court candidates were rejected, and the Country party obtained an overwhelming majority. They sat for two months only, and, passing no Bills, became known as the "Addled Parliament," refusing to grant supplies until grievances were redressed, whereupon the King suddenly dissolved the Assembly on 7th June, 1614, and governed without for six years. But his policy of raising benevolences becoming unpopular, he made State visits to various places. On the 22nd September, 1617, he came to Coventry, being met by the Mayor and Aldermen at Bishop Gate. The Civic Regalia was given up, and returned. Dr. Philimon Holland delivered an oration, and the King was entertained. A gold "loving cup" and £100 was given to His Majesty, who, in wishing success to the Town, declared, "Wherever I go, I will drink out of this cup and remember your City."

Prince Charles was created Prince of Wales in May, 1616, and Henry Sewall obtained a discharge for the rent of Cheylesmore in the year following. In 1620

the Corporation obtained a lease for twenty-one years of the Manor House and Park, with the mill and certain closes and premises in the Manor of Coventry.

The King's necessities compelled a Parliament to be again called, to meet the 30th January, 1620. Coventry returned

SAMPSON HOPKINS AND HENRY SEWALL.

Mr. Sewall was Sheriff in 1582, and Mayor in 1606. Both were Churchmen and members of the Drapers' Company. Several of the latter's letters remain among the Corporation MSS. The former was a benefactor to the Bablake Boys' Hospital, and to the Fellowship of Drapers. The Sewall family became related to Sir William Dugdale by the marriage of Richard Sewall, son of Henry, to Mary, sister of the antiquary.

The Council of the City had neither been unanimous or happy of late, and the Recorder had counselled reform; those in power asked for increased authority, and a new governing Charter was projected, but the King refused compliance until certified that the abuses at the taking of the Sacrament had been amended. Meanwhile, both the Members and Crown lawyers were busy, and Mr. Hopkins had several interviews with His Majesty, who, on the 18th of July, 1621, signed a lengthy Charter confirming previous ones to the City, and especially regulating the choice of the Council House and Authorities. The Mayor, Bailiffs, and Commonalty "were now to be made a close and select body," chosen as follows:—

"Know ye farther, that for the better rule and government of the said City, of our more especial grace, and of our certain knowledge and meer motion, we will, and by these presents, for us, our heirs, and successors, we grant and confirm unto the said Mayor, Bailiffs, and Commonalty of the said City, and to their successors, that for ever hereafter the Mayor, Recorder, Sheriffs, Bailiffs, Coroner, Steward, Chamberlains, and Wardens, and other officers of the same City, shall be yearly, and every year, named, elected, and chosen, in the Leet or View of Frankpledge, to be holden within the said City, within one month next after the Feast of St. Michael the Archangel [29th September], according to the ordinance and provision hereafter in these presents expressed and declared. And that it shall and may be lawfull to and for the Mayor of the same City for the time being, and of the rest of the persons of the Council House of the said City, or the greater part of them, yearly and every year in the said Leet, or View of Frankpledge aforesaid, to be holden in the said City, to nominate and return in writing the names of one-and-thirty persons of themselves, and of the ancientest Citizens, which before that time hath been, and executed the office or offices of Mayor, Bailiffs, Chamberlains, or Wardens, in the said City, or any of them. And that the said thirty-one persons, so in form aforesaid, nominated and returned in the Court Leet, or View of Frankpledge aforesaid, from time to time, as before is mentioned, or the greater part of them, shall not only nominate and choose one person, then Citizen of the said City, out of those which before that time hath been and executed the office of one of the Bailiffs and Sheriffs of the same City, to be Mayor of the City aforesaid for one whole year, beginning at the Feast of All Saints' [1st November] then next following after such election; but also shall name and choose two other persons, being Freemen of the said City, to be Bailiffs and Sheriffs of the same City, for one whole year, then next following after the said election. And further, they shall nominate and appoint one other fit and sufficient person, to be Coroner of the same City for one whole year, likewise next following. And moreover, they shall then nominate and elect all other officers [Usually the other ministerial officers were a Steward, two Chamberlains, two Wardens, Town Clerk, Sword Bearer, Mace Bearer, two Sub-Bailiffs, Crier, a High Constable, and an indefinite number of Constables.] within the same City heretofore used and eligible, to continue in their several places and offices, during such time and times as heretofore hath been used and accustomed in the said City."

The Council House thus became a self-elected body of, at most, thirty-one members, and to all appearance usurped the more ancient rights and free choice of the citizens at large. Removable for reasonable cause, the members were to meet in the "Guildhall" or such other convenient place in the City as the Mayor should appoint. Ten persons, being Freemen of the City, were to be elected to the office of Aldermen, to preside over the Wards, they having exercised the office of Mayor or Bailiffs before time; the King appointing

"Our well-beloved Henry Sewall, for the governing of the said Ward, called Bayley Lane Ward; Richard Butler, for the governing of the said Ward, called Jordan Well Ward; Christopher Davenport, for the governing of the said Ward, called Bishop Street Ward; William Hancock, for the governing of the said Ward, called Broad Gate Ward; Sampson Hopkins, for the governing of the said Ward, called Earl Street Ward; Henry Smith, for the governing of the said Ward, called Cross Cheaping Ward; John Herring, for the governing of the said Ward, called Spon Street Ward; Henry Davenport, for the governing of the said Ward, called Smithford Street Ward; John Barker, for the governing of the said Ward, called Much Park Street Ward; and Samuel Myles, for the governing of the said Ward, called Gosford Street Ward, to be and shall be, modern Aldermen of the said City."

They and their successors were to be chosen for life, but removable by death, "for evil government, and other reasonable causes," and their places filled up by the Mayor and Council House. The Mayor, Recorder, and the Aldermen were re-constituted Justices of the Peace within the City and County.

To assist the Council House, thirty-one Assessors, "being Freemen and Citizens," were to be appointed to tax the inhabitants for the repairs to the Town walls whenever necessary; and a second, or Common Council, of twenty-five persons of "the discreetest citizens and Freemen," who had been either Sheriff, Chamberlain, or Warden, were constituted to assist the Mayor and Council House with advice in such matters as should be referred to them therefrom, the appointment being for life, unless removed by the Mayor, etc., for departing from the House, for ill-demeanour, or other reasonable cause.

Two, three-days, fairs were allowed yearly in April and August, the City having a Court of Pie-powder, with the tolls from stalls and booths, sale of cattle, etc., thereat. No stranger, or non-Freeman, was to sell in the Town by retail, or have shop, mystery, or occupation in the Town except at fair-time, without the special license of the Mayor and Aldermen, etc., who were also licensed to hold a Court of orphans, for the governing of the orphans of such Freemen or Freewomen of the Town as had left their children to their guardianship, in like manner as the City of London held; and finally, the Charter empowered the Mayor, etc., to purchase lands and other property up to £300 per year value.

Sir Edward Coke had now reached the summit of his advancement, and many causes hastened his downfall. He incurred the King's displeasure, was summoned before the Privy Council, suspended, finally dismissed the office of Chief Justice, and forbid Westminster Hall. He was, however, afterwards restored in a measure to favour

by a match between Buckingham's brother, Sir John Villiers, and his daughter by the second marriage. He was again made Privy Councillor, but was not given the office of Chief Justice. He attended to judicial business, and sat in the Star Chamber. In 1621 he became virtually leader of the Opposition in Parliament. He moved a resolution of remonstrance, which was seconded by Pym, from which dates the commencement of that open antagonism in the Commons, which ended with the extraction of the Stuart race. The King at last received this remonstrance, and petition, from a deputation headed by Coke and Pym, and, on their entering his presence, exclaimed, "Chairs! Chairs! Here be twa'l kynges comin'!" but after he had heard the second declaration, refused further consideration, prorogued Parliament, and within a week committed Sir Edward to the Tower.

He was charged with having concealed some true examinations in the case of the Earl of Somerset's trial, and with substituting false ones, but was released by the intercession of the Prince of Wales. This harsh treatment made the ex-Chief Justice attach himself more firmly to the Country party, and the King proposed, in order to get him away, to place him upon a Commission to enquire into the state of the Church in Ireland, but Coke let it be known that he would thereupon expose the abuses of the Stuart administration there, and his threat silenced the King. Sir Edward was of prepossessing appearance, of regular and engaging features; he had great quickness and penetration, never-failing memory, and a solid judgment. He made the best of all things, especially in disgrace, and the King said of him, "Whatever way that man falls, he is sure to alight on his legs." It was his habit to go to bed at nine, and to rise at three. He was a thorough lawyer, and loved his profession, which his "Institutes" and other numerous works show. Sir Edward at one time had property at Keresley, and at Stivichall, near Coventry.

This Parliament was much engaged with inquiry into expenditure. Pym, Coke, and the members of the Country party, making great research into detail and precedence, became a more enlightened body. The Court party being unable to cope with them, His Majesty imposed silence, and closed the Assembly 5th February, 1621-2. It was at this time that Sir Edward was sent to the Tower, and his papers seized. In 1623, however, pressing needs caused the King to call a Parliament on the 12th February, and the Royal messengers made their way to the Sheriffs with writs for the elections. The people were distrustful, for subsidies and payments had been large. They looked with alarm upon the Spanish match of Prince Charles, and had forebodings for the future. Sir Edward Coke was named at Coventry to fight their, and his own, battle. It was a triangular contest, for Sir Thomas Edmonds, Knight, opposed him, and Mr. Alderman Harewell, or Harwell, was nominated.

The Court candidate, Sir Thomas Edmonds, was Treasurer of the King's Household. Born at Plymouth, of which port, as well as that of Fowey, his father

was Customer, he was introduced to the late Queen, and soon entered Parliament. His marriage with Margaret, daughter of Sir John Wood, Knight, Clerk to the Signet, brought him further recognition at Court, and he built a fine mansion at Albyns, in Essex, of which Inago Jones was the architect. He was an able speaker, a great writer, and served Charles I. as Ambassador at Fontainebleau.

The contest ended on 27th January, in the return of

SIR EDWARD COKE, KNT., AND HENRY HARWELL,

but Sir Thomas Edmonds found a seat at Chichester in the following month. Henry Harwell came of a greatly-respected local family, whose gifts to the City show their generosity. The Alderman was a mercer, and filled the office of Sheriff in 1610, and Mayor 1619. At his death in 1641, he gave the interest of £65 to the Corporation, so that bread might be distributed thrice yearly to the deserving poor by the Overseers of St. Michael's. Coke was soon released; the King dismissed him from the Privy Council, and characterised him as "the fittest instrument for a tyrant that ever was in England."

In 1623 the match between Prince Charles and the Infanta of Spain was broken off, when the Coventry Churchmen rang their bells and raised bonfires in Cross Cheaping to celebrate it.

Sir Edward's chief effort whilst Member for Coventry was at a Conference with the Lords, wherein he opened the charge, made in the name of the Commons, against the Lord Treasurer Middlesex, for extortions and the taking of bribes, and in a lengthy speech; seconded by Sir Edwin Sandys (Kent); laid grievous complaint against his conduct in office; wherein Sir Edward remarked "that bribery is like Adam, and would fain get some fig leaves if it could tell where to gather them." The impeachment ended in the Earl losing all his offices, imprisonment during the King's pleasure, and a fine of £50,000.

In 1625 Coke and the Duke of Buckingham were reconciled, and Sir Edward, aided by his party, carried an Act to abolish monopolies, and to authorise the Crown to grant patents securing to inventors, for a limited period, the exclusive rights of their inventions. He advised the Coventry Council respecting the Sheriff's oath, and at the end of the Session retired to Stoke Pogis for legal studies. He returned to his residence in Holborn to attend Parliament at the end of the prorogation, but the King expired before the date of assembly.

CHAPTER XVI.

RIGHT OF VOTING ESTABLISHED, AND THE COLLECTION OF SHIP MONEY.

Charles I. (1625 to 1640).

Coventry and the King's accession—Sir Edward Coke and Henry Harwell returned—Former elects to serve for Norfolk—"The Useless Parliament"—Dissolved—Henry Harwell and Isaac Walden chosen—Account of latter—The Plague—Lammas riding—A contested election—Sheriff's double return—Committee's report—William Purefoy and Richard Green declared Members—Freemen's right to vote established—Biographical notes—The petition of rights—A dissolution—Local events—Death of Recorder Coke—Thomas, Lord Coventry chosen instead—Account of him—Precautions against the Plague—Collection of the Ship Tax—William Prynne and the Mayor—Musters and levies—Ship money again taken—Charles, Prince of Wales.

KING CHARLES married the Princess Henrietta Maria in June, and trees were planted in the Park to commemorate the event. No less than twenty persons who had been Mayor of Coventry were alive at the Coronation rejoicings. A new Parliament assembled in June, to which Coventry returned

SIR EDWARD COKE, KNT., AND HENRY HARWELL,

but the former elected to serve for the County of Norfolk ; to which he had also been elected ; instead, but no one appears to have been chosen in his place. The ex-Chief Justice used moderation, declaring to Parliament "that the old grievances died with the late King, and, as yet, with the new none existed." But troubles arose, and when supplies were required, he moved an amendment for enquiry into expenditure, which was carried ; whereupon the Committee proceeded rigorously to search into alleged hardships, and the Assembly, which the King's friends called "the useless Parliament," was abruptly dissolved on the 12th August. Sir Edward Coke, now in his 75th year, was appointed Sheriff of the County of Bucks by the designs of the Court party.

A second Parliament was summoned for 6th February, 1626, to which two members of the Council House were chosen, viz.,

HENRY HARWELL AND ISAAC WALDEN.

The latter was an Alderman and a member of the Drapers' Company, Sheriff in 1612, and Mayor in 1620 to 1621. He altered and improved the conduit at the Grey Friars, which had inscribed upon it :—

"Ralph Joyner, Mayor, brought hither first
Fair water with great cost ;
Which Isaac Walden, Mayor likewise,
Regained when it was lost."



E. Coke

SIR EDWARD COKE, KNT.,
*Chief Justice,
 Member and Recorder of Coventry, 1623.
 Died, 1633*



Thomas Coventry

THOMAS, LORD COVENTRY,
*Lord Keeper,
 Recorder of Coventry, 1633.
 Died, 1640.*



Brooke

ROBERT GREVILLE, LORD BROOKE,
*Parliamentary General in Warwickshire, &c.,
 Died, 1643.*



Northampton

SPENCER COMPTON, EARL OF NORTHAMPTON,
*Recorder of Coventry, 1640,
 and Royalist General in Warwickshire, &c.,
 Died, 1643.*

The King took exception to Coke's being both Sheriff and Member for Norfolk ; but the ex-Justice not only sat out the Parliament, but attended the Judges at Assize.

From August, 1625, to September, 1626, a plague raged at Coventry ; business was suspended, and no markets were held. Many persons temporarily left the City. Yet, as in other years, the annual custom of riding Lammas was performed, but the Chamberlains' feast was curtailed, and the poor were relieved instead.

Again Parliament was dissolved, and a new one summoned in March, 1627. The Court party had imposed a duty upon merchandise, which, together with the ill-success of the fleet and the gloomy future outlook, aided the Country party. At Coventry the old Member, Isaac Walden, with Thomas Potter, an Alderman ; being selected by the Council House ; were opposed by two gentlemen of the County, Messrs. William Purefoy and Richard Green. Mr. Potter was a benefactor to the Town, and Mayor in 1622. The contest was considerable, but in the end one of the Sheriffs returned Messrs. Purefoy and Green, and the other Messrs. Walden and Potter. Petitions were presented to the House on the 27th March, complaining of the double return, and stating that whilst the two County gentlemen had been elected by the greater part of the electors, the other Sheriff had returned two Citizens resident within the City, and chosen by the Council House. It was contended that neither Purefoy nor Green were resident or free of the City, and could not therefore legally sit, as by the I. Henry V., c. 1, residence in a borough was a necessary qualification ; but this the Statute of 1571, allowing Burgesses non-resident as well as resident, appears to have altered. (It is probable that the nominees of the Council House at Coventry received the freedom of the City, without service in some cases, in order to become eligible for Membership.) The matter was referred to the Committee of Privileges, and on the 9th April, the Chairman, Mr. Hackewell (Amersham), reported thereon, that there were "two petitions returned, by one Mr. Isaac Walden and Mr. Thomas Potter ; and by the other Mr. Green and Mr. Purefoy, gentlemen of worth, but no inhabitants or Freemen." "That the right was in all Freemen electors, and no other, and that upon warning six hundred appeared." Sir Edward Coke, together with Sir Robert Cotton and Mr. Selden, sat on this Committee, which further resolved "that

RICHARD GREEN AND WILLIAM PUREFOY

were well elected," and the other indenture was ordered by the House to be taken off the file. Thus the governing body fared badly, and representation came again to the Freemen.

Mr. Purefoy, or Purefey, was the son of Francis Purefoy, and Eleanor, his wife, daughter of John Baskerville, of Curdworth, Warwickshire, and was born at Caldecote Manor House, near Nuneaton. His parents were dead, and to them he erected a fine tomb in Caldecote Church in 1617 ; he rebuilt the Manor House, and placed the arms

and quarterings of his family thereon. Some of the family were buried at St. Michael's, Coventry. They were allied by marriage with the Feildings; the Earl of Norwich; Anthony Grey, Earl of Kent; and the Glovers of Mancetter. Purefoy imbibed the advanced religious ideas of the times, and probably had the influence of the Wigston and Hales families from his kinship with them. In time he became a rigid Puritan, a bitter enemy to the Bishops, and a leader of the Presbyterians in Warwickshire; whilst his influence with Lord Brook added considerably in inducing that nobleman to afterwards oppose the King. Mr. Richard Green was the grandson of Edward Green, of Water Orton, and lived at Wyken, where he possessed an estate, and eight years before Herald's College had confirmed a Coat of Arms to him.

The Commons again opposed the King. The Coventry Members were silent, but Recorder Coke, as a leader of the Country party, spoke often with weighty arguments upon the greater questions. When Charles tried to intimidate Parliament, he defended the public liberty, and aided in framing and proposing "the Petition of Rights," which was the most explicit declaration of English liberty which had then appeared; after which the King personally dissolved Parliament on the 10th March, 1629, and the Commons returned home grumbling, declaring that Charles intended to take tonnage and poundage without Parliament's consent, that trade would be ruined, and religion endangered. To gain favour at Coventry, the Park lease was renewed for eighteen years.

In 1630 the Keresley tithes were purchased by the Town for £250. Two years after Mr. Purefoy was chosen Sheriff of Warwickshire, and waterworks were constructed, by which the Swanswell water was supplied to the Town.

The year 1633 saw the death of Sir Edward Coke on the 3rd September, at the age of 83, and a long inscription on his monument in Tittleshall Church, Norfolk, records his worth and offices. After his death his will was lost, to the prejudice of some of his family.

The vacant Recordership was most appropriately given to Thomas, Lord Coventry, Keeper of the Great Seal, whose chief ancestor had been a native of the City. He had been chosen to the like office for London in 1616, and was a Member for Droitwich. A famous lawyer with great practice, and immensely rich, he was chosen Solicitor-General, and knighted in the year following, being promoted to Attorney-General in 1620, in which office he had much to do with the granting of the City's Charter. He was made Lord Keeper in 1625, and elevated to the Peerage in 1628. Having twice married, he was blessed with a large family; his eldest son, Thomas, married Mary, daughter of Sir William Craven. He was of middle height, had a broad, round face, and good complexion. His eloquence was convincing, and given with a kind of lisp. He quarrelled with Buckingham, and would undoubtedly have been removed from the Lord Keepership had that nobleman lived; as it was, he held the office nearly sixteen years, and was much occupied with the

collection of the ship tax. Several of his letters to the Mayor, etc., of Coventry, remain.

Great precautions were taken in 1635 by the Town Authorities to prevent the plague's coming.

Coventry men at this time viewed with no small dislike the illegal collection of "ship money," imposed by the King without Parliament's sanction. The people grumbled as the Judges, instructed by the Lord Keeper, endeavoured to make it popular. In Elizabeth's time the tax had been voluntary, now compulsory. Each County was to provide a ship; and Warwickshire one of three hundred and twenty tons' burden, with one hundred and twenty-eight seamen; supplied with wages, provisions, and necessities for twenty-six weeks, by the 1st March, 1636. But as the County was an inland one, it was required to send £4,000 to the Treasurer of the Navy instead, to be levied upon the towns and villages of the Shire. Coventry was assessed at £500, but, on complaint, this was reduced to a fifteenth part of the whole County assessment, *i.e.*, £266 13s. 4d. The Corporation possess various letters, and the levy book, about the matter. The King's Council desired to know how the Clergy were assessed, and the Town received acquittance from the tax on the 15th February. The Bishop of the Diocese received a large silver bowl from the City, for his trouble in settling the matter, and the Recorder was paid £14 6s. 8d. (probably his fees), and had a pair of fine oxen, worth £28 given him on the occasion. The Puritans and others prejudiced the collection in Warwickshire, although the Judicial decisions against their party discouraged them. The Lords, Brooke and Say, projected the Colony of Saybrook, in Connecticut, to be peopled with Colonists from the Midlands, where liberty of conscience and a free Commonwealth could flourish. Some persons went, including members of the Washington and Throckmorton families, but subsequent events led the leaders to stay in England.

At this time the Star Chamber incurred great odium by inflicting frightful corporal punishments and heavy fines upon libellers, and when William Prynne, the author of "News from Ipswich," passed through Coventry on his way to Carnarvon Gaol, after the harsh sentence of that Assembly, he was met and welcomed by the Mayor and others, stayed Sunday, and worshipped in the Churches. Archbishop Laud heard of this, and the Privy Council sent for the Mayor to London; he and six others were fined £200. When, in 1640, Parliament voted Prynne's sentence unjust, and released him, some of his Coventry admirers accompanied him back to London.

When all fear of the plague was over, in 1637, Godfrey Legg gave a great feast at his election as Mayor.

On the rising of the Covenanters in Scotland, the King determined to oppose them by force, and issued his warrant to the Earl of Northampton to raise both trainbands and cavalry in Warwickshire and Coventry, and numerous musters were sent northward. In 1638 "ship money" was again collected in Coventry. Prince Charles was that year created Prince of Wales.

CHAPTER XVII.

FROM THE SHORT TO THE LONG PARLIAMENT.

Charles I., continued (1640 to 1641).

The Short Parliament called—The Recorder's recommendation—His death—Spencer Compton, Earl of Northampton, chosen instead—His biography—William Jesson and Simon Norton chosen Members—Account of them—The dyeing of cloth—Petitions to Parliament—The Mayor and Members against Ashmore—Dissolution—Setting the watch—The Long Parliament summoned—Preparations for contest—John Barker and Simon Norton returned—Account of former—Death of latter—His gifts—William Jesson chosen instead—His speech in defence of trade—Sir H. Mildmay's exception thereto—D'Ewes' reconciliation—Petitions, and Recorder's action against Popery—Change in names of Party.

FOR twelve years no Parliament had sat ; one was, however, summoned for 13th April, 1640, and in December, 1639, the Lord Keeper recommended Henry Frederick Thynne, his son-in-law, as a candidate for Coventry, but his Lordship died in the interval between the sealing of the writs and the convention of Parliament. His loss to the State was considerable, and, had he lived, his advice would doubtless have preserved the country from the quick and unhappy dissolution that followed.

The Great Council of the City was now favourable to the King, and chose Spencer Compton, Earl of Northampton, as their Recorder. He was born at Compton Winyates in May, 1601, and was the son of William, Earl of Northampton (a considerable number of whose letters to the Council House, written when Lord-Lieutenant of Warwickshire, yet remain), and Elizabeth, daughter of the exceedingly rich Sir John Spencer, sometime Lord Mayor of London. After his parents' runaway match, Queen Elizabeth had reconciled Sir John to his children ; as the author of "Historic Warwickshire" records ; and stood sponsor to their child, who was named Spencer after him. He was brought up at Court, and educated at Cambridge, where "his parts were so great, and his appetite for knowledge so large, that it was as much as four tutors could do to keep pace with his proficiency." Being master of various languages, he conducted several Ambassadors' audiences for Kings James and Charles. In 1616 he was made Knight of the Bath ; in 1622 accompanied Prince Charles to Madrid, and there delivered presents valued at £64,000. Assisting at that Prince's coronation ; he, in 1639, attended the King with the Warwickshire levies upon the expedition against the Scots ; and, in the civil commotions, supported the Royal cause. He was no speaker, but became celebrated for his moderate views, and the extreme justice and generosity of his dealings.

The Council of Coventry now secured the return of two Aldermen to Parliament,

WILLIAM JESSON AND SIMON NORTON.

Both were large dyers in the Town, and stout Churchmen. Possessed of considerable wealth, they and their families were great benefactors to the Town. Mr. Jesson was Mayor in 1631, and had an estate at Nuthurst. Mr. Norton, Mayor in 1633, had lands at Harnall.

The dyeing of cloth, chiefly made in the County of Gloucester, brought considerable trade into the City; many hands were employed, and the various yards in the Town were full of it. One Anthony Ashmore, a broad weaver, and others, now petitioned Parliament that restraint might be placed upon its importation into the Town to be "dressed and coloured." Ashmore's object was of a private nature, and his endeavour, if successful, would have been exceedingly detrimental to the trade in which both the Members were engaged. They presented a counter-petition from the Dyers and Clothworkers Company opposing the other one, which prayed that an Act might "be passed to better facilitate the bringing of Gloucestershire cloths into the City to be dyed." Letters from the Mayor, and the Company, were read to Parliament, in which Ashmore was described as "a contentious fellow and idle person," one "busy in other men's matters," and as "untrustworthy," being "much given to drink, and at times quite distracted." Mayor Rogerson wrote saying that Ashmore had been before the Council House, and was prevented from having any persons to help him, adding, "We had him before the Clothworkers and Weavers, and schooled the knave a little; whereat he told us he would go up to London, and desire the King to have a Commission to examine men on oath, and find out the truth; for now he declared he would take no hands; and, indeed, he could get none!" A petition from the Mayor, etc., of Coventry, was also read, "touching the toleration for stretching of cloths," with certain other matters, and answering Ashmore's charges, who, on the 30th April, was committed by the City Justices to the gaol for misdemeanour.

The King again desired immediate supply to suppress the troubles in Scotland, but his friends in Parliament mistrusted his purpose. The Assembly, wishing to redress grievances, retarded progression; whereupon the King dissolved it upon the 5th May, and the Members returned home complaining.

For fear of the Scotch rebels, and to prevent surprise, the Coventry Authorities enacted "that in these dangerous times more than ordinary care should be had of the watch," and each householder was compelled to take turn and guard, under a penalty.

Scarcely had "the Short Parliament" returned home, than writs were issued for what was to be an Assembly of very long duration. "The Long Parliament" was called to assemble at Westminster on the 3rd November, 1640. Pym and Hampden, with Lord Brooke, and others of their party, posted through the country previous to the elections, inciting the people by speeches and letters to choose men of their faction. Pym, who had some little property in coal pits near Coventry, came to the City, and

consulted with the chiefs of his party. The Sheriffs read the writ from the Market Cross, and, assisted by "honest and able men, took the poll." Mr. William Jesson was not returned, but the choice on the 13th October rested on two Aldermen,

JOHN BARKER AND SIMON NORTON.

John Barker was a draper, having a business in Cross Cheaping. He was Mayor in 1634, chosen Deputy-Lieutenant in 1642, and re-elected Mayor in 1644.

Alderman Simon Norton died 4th July, 1641, and by will left considerable gifts to various local charities. He was a benefactor to Ford's, Bond's, and the Bablake Boys' Hospitals, but especially desiring that the Church at Bablake should be made parochial, gave by will "to his son, Thomas Norton, his heirs and assigns, all his tithes at Coundon; and all his lands there lying in the common fields; and all his tithes arising in his grounds, meadows and pastures, in Biggin and Holme, called Biggin Grounds, in the parish of Clifton, in the County of Warwick, upon condition that if ever the Church of Bablake be made a Parish Church, the said Thomas Norton, his heirs and assigns, shall for ever pay out of the said tithes and lands in Coundon aforesaid, to the Minister of Bablake, for the time being, the annual sum of £13 6s. 8d., and shall permit and suffer the said Minister to receive to his own use all the said tithes of Biggin." The Alderman's death necessitated a bye-election, and on the 20th July

WILLIAM JESSON

again sat for Coventry. Mr. Jesson ably represented his *confrères* of the Council House. At this time, Sir Henry Mildmay, Knight (Malden), endeavoured to gain the consent of the House to a Bill, which would have had detrimental effect upon the country's commerce, and dealt a blow to the trades of Coventry; whereupon Mr. Jesson started up in heat, and spoke most earnestly against it. Sir Henry, taking exception to certain of his words, affirmed that Mr. Jesson looked very fiercely upon him when he spoke them, and declared that he did so in an unparliamentary way. The House, amused at such a novel case, appealed to Sir Simonds D'Ewes, Knight (Sudbury, and Sheriff of Suffolk), for his opinion as to precedent, who, treating the matter sensibly, desired to qualify such unnecessary zeal, declaring that in all his experience of such matters he had never known exception taken to looks before; and with some good-natured remarks, reconciled the offended Knight and the choleric ancient Burgess.


During February, 1641, a petition was presented from Coventry against Popery, whilst on 4th May, Recorder Northampton, with other noblemen, took the protestation to protect the Protestant religion against Popish innovations, and to defend the King, the power and privileges of Parliament, and the lawful rights and liberties of the subject. The older party names of Court and County were changing for Cavalier and Roundhead, and Parliament at this time effected considerable changes in both Church and State.

CHAPTER XVIII.

FOR KING OR PARLIAMENT: THE SIEGE OF COVENTRY.

Charles I., continued (1641-2).

Colonel Purefoy's motion—Mr. Jesson's proposal and loan—Lords Northampton and Brooke—Purefoy's fanaticism—Preparing for war—Citizen soldiers—Royalist seizures—King's order to the Mayor disobeyed—Magazine seized by the Royalists—Re-taken by the Parliamentarians—Northampton's escape—King before Coventry—A parley—His desires refused—Goes to Stoneleigh—Mr. Dugdale's summons refused—The red flag hung out—The siege—Lady Hales killed—New Gate taken—The fight within the gate—Royalists repulsed—King goes to Nottingham—Siege withdrawn—Southam fight—City relieved by the Parliament—Rupert's attack on Caldecote Manor House—Doubtful bravery—Setting up the Royal Standard—Mr. Jesson's "No"—Essex garrisons the City—Governor Barker—Preparing for a second siege—Petitions—Soldiers pay—Coining the Town's plate—Mr. Jesson's seasonable help—The King's summons again refused—Battle of Edge Hill.

N the 15th December the remonstrance to the King upon the state of the nation was passed by the House, whereupon Colonel Purefoy, now Member for Warwick, assured the Assembly that the only way to satisfy the kingdom was to give greater confidence to their constituents, and thus obtain from them the supplies so urgently required. He proposed that their declaration be published, and amidst cries "Agreed" and "Order it," the Speaker inquired what declaration was meant; whereunto Purefoy replied, "The Grand Remonstrance." But the motion met with great opposition, which delayed the vote until darkness set in, and when the Clerk could not see to write, it was resolved, by 152 to 53, that candles be brought. Two hours hot discussion followed, and at length the motion for printing was carried by 135 to 33. Considerable harm was done to the King's cause by the publication, and His Majesty thereupon circulated a reply.

Parliament required money ostensibly to quell the Irish rebellion, and in April, Mr. Jesson proposed an advance of £10,000, wherewith to purchase cloth for "the adventurers in Ireland." In May he turned over a £1,000 debt, due to him from some Scottish merchants, towards the "brotherly assistance to the Scotch," for twelve months, and shortly afterwards obtained the House's warrant to transport arms from London, or elsewhere, to Coventry.

The Parliament endeavoured to secure all offices of trust for its friends: Lord Warwick to command the fleet, Earl Essex to the Generalship of the army, and Lord Brooke to the Lord-Lieutenancy of Warwickshire. It also declared its intention to

dispose of the Militia, and Earl Northampton, with the loyal Peers, refused to obey any order unwarranted by law. Between Northampton and Brooke considerable animosity arose, and the latter desired that the Earl "might be *translated* to Warwick Castle, there to stand sentry to fright crows and kites." On the 14th June, Colonel Purefoy with some soldiers, entered Warwick Church and did considerable damage; he also caused the Market crosses at Warwick and Nuneaton to be pulled down. "William Purefoy," writes a Royalist, "that great destroyer of crosses and images! I wonder how he forebore to do outrage on his own face; it looks so like St. Dunstan's, with a pair of tongs at his nose. He was the hammer that beat down all the ancient monuments in the Earl's Chapel at Warwick, and in St. Mary's Church there, for which at one time he received £1,000, and at another £1,500, and had bestowed upon him a great share of Sir Henry Compton's office, worth £300 per annum."

Both parties prepared for war. Northampton had most of the County nobility and gentry, their tenants and dependents; Brooke secured the townsmen, their journeymen and apprentices, and some of the smaller gentry. The Parliament's party in Coventry were reinforced by the arrival of four hundred "sectaries" from Birmingham. The gates were closed, the towers mounted with cannon, and an improved system of watch introduced. The Royalist party within the Town were but about 500, whilst of the 2,800 volunteers of Warwickshire who assembled at the Parliament's musters, Coventry found 800. It had 200 men in the trained bands, and a troop of horse was raised, of which Colonel Purefoy had command. John Barker became Governor of the City, various Aldermen and citizens were made officers, and a Committee was appointed to act. Without the Town, Northampton's men occupied the roads, and Mr. Jesson reported to Parliament that they had seized a military chest, one thousand suits of soldiers' clothing, and numerous horses and wagons, intended for the forces in Ireland.

On the 23rd July, the King desirous to gain the City, directed the Mayor, Mr. Christopher Davenport, and the Sheriffs, to attend him at Leicester, but the Council House forced them to remain. Northampton ordered the loyalist Aldermen, Million and Clark, to seize the magazine and stores for the King, which they effected, and placed under a small guard, but the Parliamentary leaders, Aldermen Barker and Basnett, ousted the Royalists, and Northampton hastily escaped by a postern in the City walls, from the back of his quarters at the Bull Inn.

The King, deciding to visit Coventry, crossed the Avon at Wolston with a force variously estimated at from 3,000 to 7,000 men. Staying at Whitley House, he posted his forces between the City and London and Warwick. He notified his intention to occupy the Town; but the inhabitants, displaying Lord Brooke's colours from the walls, instructed the Mayor to reply that "His Majesty's Royal person would be most respectfully welcome to them, but that they humbly besought His Majesty to pardon them if they could not with safety permit his Cavaliers to enter with him." After

further parley, the citizens answered that they "would receive the King and two followers, but no more," whereupon His Majesty retired to Sir Thomas Leigh's at Stoneleigh, and the next day directed the Herald, Mr. Dugdale, to summons the City to surrender, desiring all strangers to depart, and declaring that if the inhabitants laid down their arms he would pardon both, but, on persistence, was determined to proceed against them as traitors, and reduce the City to obedience. It was known that Parliament was sending aid, so the townsmen mounted a red flag and refused to comply, and neither Mr. Dugdale, or Mr. Wightwick, the City Steward, could entice them to obedience. The King at once brought his artillery into action, but, with his small force, was unable to effectually surround the City, which contained from eight to ten thousand persons. His guns plied upon the walls southward, and did considerable damage. At the White Friars they beat down a tower, wherein Lady Hales and another person were killed. New Gate was considerably battered, and the Cavaliers made entrance, to find however that the roadway was stopped with harrows, carts, timber, and furniture; when the Royalists, pressing through the gate, cried "On! on!" they met a most determined resistance from the musketeers and women, who plied the Cavaliers with shot and stones from the windows and roofs of the houses, whilst a troop of armed citizens in the streets forced them back, and, after several unsuccessful attempts to advance, compelled the loyalists to retire precipitously through the gate.

The King left to raise the Standard at Nottingham, and the Parliament reliefs were near at hand; whereupon the Royalist camp was broken up, when the townsmen issued out and harassed the retreating forces. The siege of Warwick Castle was also abandoned, the Royal garrison at Kenilworth removed with Mr. Dugdale's aid in safety, and the King's forces withdrew from Warwickshire. But at Southam they met the Parliament aids for Coventry, when a skirmish ensued, in which the Parliamentarians had the better, and Coventry was relieved.

At this time Prince Rupert, with some forces, proceeded to Colonel Purefoy's house at Caldecote in order to seize him; he, however, received warning, and escaped in time to hide in a barley field. His men were away at Coventry, but Dame Joan Purefoy, with her son-in-law, George Abbot, seven men servants, four maids, and some children, were in the house. They refused the Prince admission, and he proceeded to take the place by force. The defenders, however, fought bravely, killing three of his officers and a dozen soldiers. After considerable time the Prince ordered fire to be placed to the gate, and thereby forced the little garrison to surrender, whereupon Dame Purefoy implored him not to injure them, and Rupert, surprised at the boldness of so few persons, granted the request. Being pleased with the soldierly bearing of George Abbot, he offered him a commission in his army, which was declined. Search was made, unsuccessfully, for the Colonel; but after the Cavaliers departure he returned from his hiding-place into the house, and was joyously received by his faithful wife. The

Royalists blamed his discretion, and called it cowardice, one declaring that "when he should have fought with the enemy he hid himself in a barley field, for which a waterman at Temple Stairs who had been his soldier refused to carry him."

When the Royal Standard was set up at Nottingham, on a very tempestuous day, and the King's proclamation declared Essex a traitor, the Commons House took prompt measures, and required every Member instantly to answer whether they would hazard life and fortune with the Lord-General or not? Mr. Jesson then desired time to consider a matter of such moment, but being pressed, replied "No." At this a great uproar arose, and the Speaker fell upon him with harsh language; whereupon the ancient gentleman, terrified with the displeasure shown towards him, desired to reverse his decision, but was refused, and other dissentient Members answered "Aye."

Parliament now anxiously considered the maintaining of the Coventry garrison, and about the middle of September, Essex, marching from London, sent forces to Coventry under Lords Peterborough and Rochford, Sir William Constable, and Colonel Brown. All known Royalists were secured, or detained, and such as fled had their property seized and confiscated. The breaches in the walls were repaired, and cannon mounted on the gates, additional defences erected, and the houses immediately without the chief gates pulled down. Whilst the men performed these works, and their daily watch and ward, the women were not idle, for they formed at the Cross daily to the sound of the drum, and bearing spades and other implements, proceeded into the Park to fill up the quarries, so that they should not again afford shelter to an enemy.

In the House on the 27th September, a petition from Coventry was read respecting certain monies, raised upon propositions according to Parliament's order, for the support of the garrison. It was enacted that the monies should be paid to persons appointed by the Parliament, to pay the regiments quartered in the Town; and the House also licensed the City to buy six more pieces of cannon, according to the petitioners' desires. On 6th December the Committee of Safety was ordered to deliver to Alderman Basnett £580 2s. 5d., the value of plate raised in the Town and County of Coventry, and also £200, raised in the City alone, for the payment of arrears due to the garrison.

Early in October, in expectation of another siege, Coventry petitioned Parliament asking for "speedy relief," whereupon Mr. Jesson promptly agreed to lend £1,000 towards the City's urgent defence, which the Commons Journal acknowledges "as a testimony of his affection to the Town," and the House ordered repayment of the loan out of the £1,500 worth of plate sent in by the City, "so soon as it can be coined." The King's army approached Coventry, and Prince Rupert demanded it to be given up; the King promising to forget the past, and offering protection from plunder if it were yielded; but the Mayor and chief citizens "refused to surrender to the King without the concurrent authority of Parliament," and thereupon prepared for the worst; but the King passed by, and the indecisive battle of Edge Hill was fought on the 23rd.



Simon Norton

SIMON NORTON, GENT.,
Member for Coventry, 1640.
DIED, 1641.



B. Feilding

BASIL FEILDING, EARL OF DENBIGH,
Recorder of Coventry, 1646.
DIED, 1675.



Essex

ROBERT DEVEREUX, EARL OF ESSEX,
Recorder of Coventry 1643.
DIED, 1648.



SIR WILLIAM DUGDALE,
Summoned Coventry to surrender to the King, 1642.
DIED, 1685-6.



William Purefoy

COLONEL WILLIAM PUREFOY,
Recorder and Member of Coventry, 1654.
DIED, 1659?



O. St. John

OLIVER ST. JOHN,
Lord Chief Justice and Recorder of Coventry, 1659.
DIED, 1673.

CHAPTER XIX.

BETWEEN THE BATTLES OF EDGE HILL AND NASEBY.

Charles I., continued (1643-5).

Deaths of Lords Brooke and Northampton—Robert, Earl of Essex, chosen Recorder—Biography—Prince Rupert at Birmingham—William, Earl Denbigh, killed—Basil Feilding succeeds to title—Parliament and its Coventry Committee—Intercepted letters—Seizures—Establishing Presbyterianism—Taking the Covenant—Order for equipment—Committee of Sequestrators formed—The troubles of Dr. Hinton—The Mayor disabled—Governor Barker appointed—Conspiracy—A dispute settled—The Coventry horse sent to Gloucester—Rival Parliaments—The Scots army in England—Charges—Martial law—A pensionary member—The "new model" army—Self-denying ordinance—Changes thereby—Recorder, Basil Feilding—Battle of Naseby.

NEALOUSLY watching their City for the Parliament, the Council House had ten thousand inhabitants and a garrison within the walls. When Lord Brooke passed through the Town, he caused his Chaplain to preach from the text in Esther, "If I perish, I perish;" and, strangely enough, was killed at Lichfield, a few days afterwards. Earl Northampton also met his death on 19th March at Hopton, whilst leading a charge. He had routed the enemy's cavalry and taken eight of their guns, when his horse falling, and his men pressing forward, left him momentarily surrounded by the enemy's foot. Fighting bravely, he killed their Colonel and two soldiers, but refusing quarter, was finally despatched by a blow delivered from behind. His son, Lord James (who succeeded to the title), asked for his body, but was refused, unless an exchange was made for it with the prisoners and guns taken by the Royalists. That being denied, the Parliament officers buried the body at Derby.

The Parliamentarians, holding the power in the Council House, chose Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex; their General; as Recorder, who; born in 1592; had learnt the art of war in the Palatinate, Spain, and Scotland. The King appointed him Chamberlain of his Household, and in 1641 Lieutenant-General, South of Trent. Parliament, with whom he was exceedingly popular, desired his appointment as General-in-Chief, but on his refusal to obey an unconstitutional order of the King, he was deprived of the Chamberlainship, and thereupon he placed himself entirely at Parliament's disposal. That Authority, in July, 1642, appointed him their General, and by vote declared, they would "live and die with him." The King proclaimed the Earl a traitor, and he commanded at Edge Hill; after which, coming to Coventry, he became personally known to the Council House.

William, Earl of Denbigh, was killed on the King's side during Prince Rupert's onslaught at Birmingham in April, and Basil Feilding, his son, a strong Parliamentarian, succeeded to the title. In spite of his mother's entreaties, he kept firm to the Parliament, who appointed him their General in Warwickshire and the associated Counties.

In May, the Committee at Coventry intercepted letters from Sir John Brooke, which Parliament ordered to be printed, and expecting the City to be besieged, sent arms and ammunition to the Town. Many horses and army wagons were taken by the Committee, and Parliament ordered them to be detained until Prince Rupert should make satisfaction for those he had taken. The Committee asked Parliament to divert the King's army, and the House thereupon desired Mr. Zouch Tate (Northampton) to write to them promising relief.

The Long Parliament desired to abolish Bishops, but was only prepared to go with such modified Presbyterianism as military reverses and political circumstances required, in order that the Scots army might be brought into England; and on 23rd September, the Parliament and the Assembly of Divines, took the Solemn League and Covenant. At St. Michael's, Coventry, the Rev. Obadiah Grew was a staunch Presbyterian, and Lord Denbigh ordered his soldiers to subscribe to the Covenant in the Church. An entry in the Church books reads: "Paid for beere in ye Vestry, when ye Covenant was taken, 5s. 7d." Most of the citizens had aided the Parliament's cause, but there were some "malignants," and the Covenant being applied, discovered friend from foe. His Lordship, desiring the citizens to have "mutual confidence," promised that their privileges should be respected by his military, and that justice should be administered impartially.

The House of Commons ordered equipment from the public stores to be delivered to Mr. Jesson, in April, for the service at Coventry; and a Committee of Sequestrators for Warwickshire, and Coventry, was appointed to seize the real and personal estates of delinquent Royalists, on which were the Members for Coventry, the Mayor, and Messrs. Hales, Basnett, Bromwich, and others. They soon had plenty to do, and Royalist and Churchman were brought before their tribunal on the least suspicion. The case of Samuel Hinton, LL.D., a wealthy citizen and Master in Chancery, will show the state of things in the City at this time. He, like his father, the late Vicar of St. Michael's, received a Court appointment, and before the Long Parliament assembled, had spoken at Stoke, saying "that Parliament would do more for Pym ye collier than for His Majesty." Pym had a lease of some coal-pits from the Council House jointly with Mr. Isaac Bromwich, the Committeeman, and the calling of the Member "a collier" gave annoyance to Messrs. Samuel Hopkins and William Babbington, two young lawyers, the former of whom had married Mr. Jesson's daughter, and Bromwich thereupon threatened Hinton. The matter slumbered until August, 1642, when the King being near the City, Mr. Hinton received the greatest indignity, and

Mr. Barker forced him and his wife to leave the Town, without taking hardly anything with them. He had an order to go where he pleased without the walls, but was turned back by the soldiers and roughly handled, that night being lodged in the Sheriff's house, and the next day brought to trial, whereat, although his answers were satisfactory, he was sent to prison, "as the commitment had already been made out;" but was eventually let out on bail, and confined to his house. Soon after, Lord Brooke's soldiers broke open his doors, searched his study, and seized his horses, and on the 16th March, Colonel Purefoy, and his men took him a prisoner to Kenilworth in the night time, where, fed on fare "coarse, short, and nasty," and without a change of clothing, he continued some time, until his wife obtained his liberty by paying £40. Returning to Coventry, he obtained the Committee's permission to reside in the Counties of Warwick or Coventry, without the City, and taking a house at Stoke, obtained a warrant, signed by Barker and Bromwich, to remove his goods there. But the Committee; under a pretext to search for arms; ordered the Sheriffs to remove his plate and valuables, whereupon the poor badgered individual informed them, through his wife, that he would take a house at Monks Kirby or wherever they pleased; to which Governor Barker assenting, saw his goods without the gate; but shortly after Mrs. Rowney, the Mayor's wife, Mrs. Davenport of "the Butchery," and other ladies of the Town came after them, by the Committee's connivance, and brought back the wagons in triumph. In fear of his life; he then fled to Lichfield, where he had a house, but whilst he escaped his enemies, his goods at Coventry became confiscated.

Mr. George Monk, who had been chosen Mayor, was found disaffected to the Parliament, and removed from office, whereupon Governor Barker became Chief Magistrate, 1643-4, and wearing "a sword and buff coat under his gown, was attended by civil and military officers, with trumpets and drums." The Committee wrote to the Parliament, 27th November, recommending the place of Governor of Coventry to the care of the Lord-General, which was agreed to, and Mr. Jesson took the House's message to him. On the 3rd December, Earl Essex replied that Lord Denbigh had both Houses' authority in the matter, but, as Recorder of the City, he would see that nothing contrary to the Parliament's service, or the City's requirements, was done. A plot to turn the Town to the enemy, and fire the place, had been discovered, on report of which the Houses at a Conference, considered the state of the City, and desired Lord Essex to compose the differences between Lord Denbigh, Colonel Purefoy, and the place, in order to avoid a fatality. Denbigh had entered protestation against Purefoy obeying General Essex's command, and they were accordingly summoned to "His Excellency's quarters at London," and the trouble adjusted.

In August, 1643, Parliament ordered Colonel Purefoy to take the Coventry horse, and assist Colonel Massey, Governor of Gloucester, then besieged in that City. On the way he took eight horses and twenty Royalists prisoners. The horse stayed with

Massey after the siege was raised, and the Committee at Coventry sent letters to Parliament asking for their prompt return, which the House ordered as soon as the Gloucester horse could be recruited, and by a letter of Messrs. Bosseville (Warwick) and Knightley (Northampton) informed the Committee of their decision.

In January, 1644, the King called a rival Parliament at Oxford, and the Scots army entered England. In February, Coventry had to find £54 15s. 1d. monthly towards their support, and £30 towards the cost of new modelling the army. In August, Earl Denbigh and Colonel Purefoy were appointed by Parliament upon a Commission for trial and execution by martial law.

In June, 1645, the Commons relieved some of their Members, who had either lost their estates or for other reasons required it, out of the Crown revenues. Colonel Purefoy was allowed £4 a week, and became a "pensionary Member."

The project of Cromwell and the Independents to exclude Members of Parliament from all offices, whether civil or military, placed their party in power, for those removed were principally Presbyterians, and the vacant posts became filled with their own friends. It was first proposed to place the army under the "new model," and the motion to exclude Members from holding positions was afterwards passed in a thin House. "The Self-denying Ordinance" made Members renounce their own advantages, and the Presbyterians lost credit with the army, but in time the army itself became the authority in the State. Lords Warwick and Denbigh surrendered their commissions, and Lord Essex, after some demur, followed suit. Barker and Purefoy gave up their respective Governorships of Coventry and Warwick, and apparently the Recordership of Coventry became vacant. Sir Thomas Fairfax became Commander-in-Chief for the Parliament, Cromwell and the Independents in the House obtained control of the forces, and officered them, and as neither Fairfax or Cromwell resigned, Essex's party became discontented. On the 12th of May the House ordered Major Peter Burgoyne to become Governor of Coventry, with command of the foot regiment that was Colonel Barker's; whilst to that of the horse, Captain Lieutenant Henry Flower was appointed; but Major Burgoyne desired to be excused on account of age, and the regiment thereupon petitioned asking to have Captain Willoughby appointed instead. Colonel Colmore was also nominated to have Colonel Purefoy's command at Warwick.

On Essex's death, Basil, Earl of Denbigh, became Recorder of Coventry. He was a favourite with the Coventry Parliamentarians, and his seat was at Newnham Paddox. He fought at Edge Hill, and soon became a distinguished Commander, but he had little sympathy with Cromwell's lofty designs.

Leicester having surrendered to the King in May, Parliament, expecting Coventry would be besieged, promptly ordered General Brereton to proceed there with his forces from Chester, but on the 14th of June following, General Fairfax defeated the King's army at Naseby, and soon after Leicester fell into his hands.

CHAPTER XX.

IN EVIL DAYS: THE REGICIDES AND THE KING'S DEATH.

Charles I., continued (1645 to 1648).

The King's retreat—Scots Army at Coventry—Purefoy appointed on a Commission thereto—Seasonable help—Parliament's thanks—Disgarrisoning Coventry—Decision of the House—Letters, etc., of Messrs. Barker and Jesson—King goes to Scots Army—Is delivered to Parliament—Mr. Jesson and Episcopacy—Parliament's endeavours for peace—"Pride's purge"—Mr. Barker excluded—"The Rump"—Troubles at Coventry—Lord Denbigh and the King's trial—Colonel Purefoy sits as a Judge—Signs the King's death-warrant—"Tinker Fox, of Coventry"—Dr. Grew's letter to Cromwell—King's death—Prince of Wales takes title of King—Abolishing the House of Peers—Council of State appointed—Purefoy on the Admiralty—His rewards—"Freeborne John" objects to his evidence.



AFTER Naseby the King hastened westward, and Fairfax followed. Eleven regiments of the Scots army passing by Coventry, encamped at Stoke. Colonel Purefoy, who had been appointed an English Commissioner with the Scotchmen, obtained provisions for them from the City, and Parliament ordered one hundred barrels of powder, with match and ball, to be delivered to the army from the Public stores at Coventry and Warwick. On 9th July the House desired Mr. Jesson to thank his constituents for their "seasonable help."

During the years 1645-6 the Independents became a strong party in the House, and sided with the army, Cromwell becoming their leader. In March, 1646, the seat of war having changed, Mr. Jesson expressed a desire that Coventry should be disgarrisoned and its new works "slighted," which the House, by 91 to 79 votes, ordered to be done; but the Committee at Coventry petitioned, and, on further consideration, the Town was continued a garrison with two hundred soldiers only, under the Governorship of Colonel Thomas Willoughby, and the remainder of the troops sent to Ireland.

Mr. Jesson now became busy upon a Committee of the House for restraining "malignant" Ministers, and his letters show the large amount of "misery and faction" which existed in Coventry at the time. Great grumbling was shown against the heavy taxes required by Parliament, and Mr. Barker attended to the proportionate assessment of the City and County.

After many reverses and attempts to come to a settlement, the King, in April, took refuge with the Scots army, but they were not prepared to side with him whilst

he refused to allow a Presbyterian Church of England. Negotiations were entered into for his surrender to the Parliament, which was effected in January, 1647. When most of the Royal garrisons were given up or taken, Parliament decided to disband the army, but retained six regiments for service in Warwickshire.

Parliament considered the concessions made by the King with a view to a settlement, and Mr. Jesson spoke upon His Majesty's answer relating to Episcopacy. Replying to those Members who desired to entirely root out Bishops, he "questioned whether, if in spite of all that had been said to the contrary, Bishops were not far more visibly mentioned in Holy Writ than in the form proposed to be set up," and he thought that "those gentlemen who were so eager to extirpate Episcopacy, had better first root it out of all evidence in the Gospel and antiquity;" whereto Alderman Pennington (London), fencing with the question, replied that the Covenant bound them to cast it out, and as a consequence, the King's proposals were unsatisfactory. In December, after considerable debate, the Commons voted that the King's concessions were sufficient ground for a settlement, but Cromwell, with his party, the army, and Independents, were plotting to obtain absolute power, and on the 6th, desirous of obtaining an unanimous faction to forward the drastic measures he proposed, purged the Long Parliament of about one hundred and fifty Members by sending Colonel Pride with his soldiers to the House to turn out, or exclude, such as were objectionable. Colonel John Barker was one of the Members seized, and violently taken to the Queen's Court, at Westminster. Together with Sir John Burgoyne (Warwickshire), and ninety-four others, he was refused admittance at the doors of the House, and subjected to violent usage by the army's officers, whilst Thomas Boughton, the other Warwickshire Member, was imprisoned with forty-six others. The representatives remaining in the House continued sitting, and the disabled House obtained the name of the "Rump," or "Remnant," Parliament. Amongst those remaining were Messrs. Purefoy and Bosville (Warwick) and Sir Peter Wentworth (Tamworth), but the name of Mr. Jesson does not appear. They voted the late treaty with the King both dishonourable and dangerous, and that he should be brought to trial, as guilty of treason against the people. The exclusion of Alderman Barker from the House was disapproved of at Coventry, whereupon Colonel Thornbough's regiment was sent to the Town to keep all quiet there, but during Christmas serious riots occurred between the townsmen and the soldiers.

The few Lords who constituted the Upper House at Westminster refused to join in passing "the ordinance for erecting a High Court of Justice for the King's trial," and adjourned. Lord Denbigh, their Speaker, not only refused the Commons desire to place him on the Commission, but declared "he would be torn to pieces rather than share in so infamous a business." The refusal annoyed the Commons, who, considering the Lords useless, soon declared themselves "the supreme power of the nation."

Colonel Purefoy took a prominent part in the King's trial, and was appointed a Judge under the Act. He served on the Committee which made arrangements for the trial, and prepared the apartments for His Majesty's use. Not only did he attend the whole of the Courts sittings at Westminster Hall, except one, from the 8th to 29th January, but was present when sentence was pronounced, and signed the King's death-warrant in bold and clear handwriting, "Willim Purfoy." Such were the Republican tendencies of this regicide gentleman that in after times he publicly declared: "I bless God that I have lived to see the ruin of Monarchy, and also that I have been instrumental in upsetting it, for I do here acknowledge that such was my design ever since I was at Geneva, thirty years ago." Another person connected with Coventry, Colonel Fox, acted as the chief officer of President Bradshaws guard during the trial. Originally a brazier of Coventry, he became known by the *sobriquet* of "Tinker Fox, of Coventry," and Parliament appointed him the Governor of Tamworth.

When Cromwell was at Coventry, Dr. Grew, the Vicar of St. Michael's, had spoken to him upon the then privately discussed design of the King's death. The Minister represented the evils of such a course to the country, and was assured there was no fear of such a fatality, Cromwell suggesting deposition as a far better means of settlement. After sentence had been pronounced upon the King, Dr. Grew wrote an earnest appealing letter to the General, reminding him of this, and although it reached Cromwell, no attention was given to the suggestions.

King Charles suffered death at Whitehall on the 30th January, and after his death great confusion spread throughout the nation. The Prince of Wales, then at the Hague, assumed the title of King. Parliament continued sitting, and Cromwell's party was still aiming at power. The subject of the abolition of the House of Lords being debated by the Commons; on the question "that the House do take the advice of the House of Peers in the exercise of legislative power;" Colonel Purefoy acted as a teller for the "Noes." The motion passing in the negative, 44 against 29, the Commons then voted the Lords dangerous and useless, and abolished them. On the 7th they did away with the Kingship also, and resolved to elect a Council of State and form a Commonwealth. For the considerable share which Colonel Purefoy had taken in the King's trial he "received £1,500, and some forfeited delinquents estate also," and on the 6th June, 1649, was chosen on the Committee of the Admiralty and Navy, apparently offices of profit at the time. When he became a witness against John Lilburne, the Leveller, that worthy objected to his evidence on the ground that "those who called themselves keepers of the liberties of England" could not legally bear witness against him.

CHAPTER XXI.

OLIVERIAN PARLIAMENTS.

The Commonwealth (1648 to 1658).

Establishing the Commonwealth—The Council of State—Purefoy and offices of profit—Rebuilds Caldecote—City purchase of the fee-farm rents—Barker re-admitted to House—Local Act for Maintenance of Ministers—Assessment—Charles II.—His flight from Worcester—Mrs. Jane Lane and the King's preservation—Prisoners taken—Colonel Legge's escape—The "Rump" expelled—Barebones Assembly—Cromwell made Lord-Protector—Resigns its powers to him—A Parliament called—Colonel Purefoy and Major Beake returned—Biographical notes—Purefoy in Committee—Marriages by civil contract—Ejectment of Ministers and schoolmasters—"Coventry Blue"—Fines and rewards—Oliver's last Parliament—Purefoy and Beake re-elected—The Major and the Kingship—Members' letters—The Mayor and Alderman Nailer's election—Ministers' pay—Judges' fees—Purefoy's request for freedom to be conferred—Cromwell's "Other House"—Parliament dissolved—The Protector's death.

DURING February the Republican party in the House of Commons, with the assistance of the army, excluded those Members who refused to concur with their late proceedings against the King, and, abolishing Monarchy and the House of Lords, adopted a Commonwealth, the Executive of which was placed in the hands of a Council of State. Earl Denbigh, with the Chief Justice, Oliver St. John, and Colonel Purefoy, were chosen members of it, and whilst the former considered the office "an honour," but seldom attended; the latter occasionally acted as President, and was re-elected in 1650-51-52. Amongst other offices of pay which he held was that of the Admiralty, and his adherence to the Commonwealth brought him such profit that he was enabled to rebuild his Manor House at Caldecote. In March, an Act was passed for selling the fee-farm rents of the Crown, which were placed in the hands of Trustees, who were empowered to sell at not under eight years' purchase. During May and August, 1650, those at Coventry, worth £148 3s. 3d. per annum, were offered for sale, and the City became the possessors, paying £1,421 13s. 3d. for them, whilst the Cheylesmore fee-farm was contracted for £81. Colonel Purefoy received the thanks of the Council House, together with a silver cup, for his services.

The Long Parliament now consisted of but about fifty Members, and had become an object of derision. In order to restore its prestige, it was decided, in October, 1649, to re-admit such of the excluded Members as would approve of all that had

been done since "Pride's purge." Alderman Barker, having satisfied a Committee by affirming disapproval of his former vote, agreeing with the proceedings against the King, and engaging to work in the Commonwealth's interest, was re-admitted to the House.

The Ministers at the Coventry Churches were still badly paid, and a Bill was obtained in 1650 "for the more frequent preaching of the Gospel and better maintenance of the Ministers in the City." By this a rate of one shilling and sixpence in the pound, or at most £400, could be made, allowing St. Michael's £120, Holy Trinity £100, and an assistant or lecturer £100. Non-payment continued, however, and in January, 1652, Colonel Purefoy (who had apparently then been chosen Recorder) complained to the Mayor, etc., of the neglect. In December, Messrs. Purefoy and Barker were appointed by Parliament to adjust the assessment between Warwickshire and Coventry, in the matter of taxes required for the nation's use during the year. They fixed the latter at one-twelfth of the whole sum demanded, and the amount required at £177 15s. 6d. per month.

Charles II., with a Scottish army, entered England in July, 1651, and proceeding rapidly southward, entered Shropshire, but received very little support. Considerable preparations were made at Coventry to check his movements, and a regiment of foot was hastily raised. The Parliament's Generals, Lambert and Harrison, with their troops, met Cromwell coming from the north at Coventry on the 25th August. But the seat of war changed to Worcester, where, on the 3rd September, the King was hopelessly beaten, fled to Boscobel, and, as the servant of Mrs. Jane Lane, of Bentley (afterwards Lady Fisher, of Packington), passed through some portion of Warwickshire in disguise, and at length escaped to the Continent. Many of the Scotch and other prisoners taken were brought to the City, and the gaol, Churches, and other secure places became their prisons. Colonel Legge, an ancestor of the Earls of Dartmouth, was for the fifth time taken prisoner. He was wounded at Worcester, and confined in Coventry gaol, where his wife visited him by permission of the officer in charge, and so adroitly changed the Colonel's attire, that he passed the guards, and managed to escape.

Cromwell forcibly ejected the "Rump" Parliament on the 20th April, 1653, whilst practically voting its own perpetual existence, for it was trying to rush a Bill through the House for calling a new Parliament, of which all present should be *de facto* Members, and have the right to revise the elections of such Members as were considered disabled to sit, but Cromwell and the army desired the power of Parliament in their own hands. The General marched three hundred musketeers into the House, and finally clearing it, locked the doors and took away the keys.

The "Barebones" Assembly, which met at Westminster 4th July, 1653, was the creation of Cromwell and the Council of Officers. It declared itself a Parliament on the 6th. The General and this Council had chosen the names from lists sent them

by the Congregational Churches, but the Members were but little known in their Shires. There came together "less than two hundred of the most sanctified creatures in the nation to the Council Chamber at Whitehall, each presented a ticket, entered, and sat in chairs around the table from whence Cromwell addressed them." Coventry sent no direct representatives, but John St. Nicholas and Richard Lucy represented the whole of Warwickshire. This strange Assemblage resigned all its powers into the hands of its creators on 12th December, and the officers soon persuaded Cromwell to accept "the Protectorship of the Commonwealth." Colonel Purefoy was not chosen on the new Council of State at this time.

The articles agreed upon for the future government of the Commonwealth required a Parliament to be called every three years, which was not to be dissolved until it had sat for at least five months. The national coffers were empty, and necessity required one to be summoned for the 3rd September, 1654. Coventry regained its right to elect, and in July, when the Protector and his Council received the lists, it was found that the City had returned

COLONEL WILLIAM PUREFOY AND MAJOR ROBERT BEAKE.

The Colonel was also returned for Warwick, but as his influence was more considerable at Coventry, he chose "the greater honour of City representation, and left the old Borough for his first Parliamentary love." Cromwell had summoned Members from England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, and a "William Purefoy, Esq.," was chosen for "Limerick and Killmallock City and Town." Major Beake was an Alderman, and one of the last Municipal officers who sat as a Burgess for Coventry. He was a draper, but held a commission in the army under the Parliament, acting as Sheriff in 1651 and Mayor in 1655. He was an Independent, and a Minister of Coventry (the Rev. W. Tonge) speaks of him as "that brave, honest, and ingenious gentleman, Major Robert Beake, who for many years was the great ornament of your City and society."

Shortly after the election, Purefoy was placed upon a Committee of inquiry into trades, and afterwards on one in aid of the Protestants in Piedmont, but he occupied himself with things other than Parliamentary. By an Act passed in 1653 marriage had been made a civil contract; the banns were to be thrice published at Church and in the Market Place, and in order to make the contract legal, applicants were required to express their mutual desire to be married before a Justice. Thus the records of Nuneaton have it, that on "The first day of April, 1654, the purport and intent of marriage between William Varnham and Jane Lenton, both of ye parish of Nonneaton, was published with ye consent of both partys in ye open Market of Nonneaton on three several Market days, and the Register made oath that the above-named were published according to the certificate, and the said William Varnham and Jane Lenton were joined together at Caldecote, before William Purefoy, Esq., one of ye Justices

of ye Peace for this Countie, the 25th daye of April, 1654, in the presence of Ric. Green, Charles Renark, Nathaniel Warman, and Robert Hollinsworth.

“(Signed) WILLIAM PUREFOY.”

In August, 1654, an Act was passed “for the ejection of scandalous, ignorant, and insufficient Ministers and schoolmasters.” In each County, Lay Commissioners were appointed, with power to call before them any public preacher or lecturer having a legal stipend, or schoolmasters. Amongst the Commissioners from Warwickshire were Purefoy, Beake, and Basnett representing Coventry, with Dr. Grew, of St. Michael’s Church, as “Assistant Ejector.” By this Act many of the Warwickshire clergy suffered greatly, and were reduced to great poverty and distress, their chief fault being that they did not belong to the ruling factions, who, on their ejection, filled the places with friends of their own persuasion.

About this time the making of blue thread was lost to the Town, and a foreign importation took its place, whilst many other articles of native manufacture were superseded by goods from abroad. The Puritans objected to sports of all kinds—to wakes, morris dancing, May poles, and stage plays, and the Town suffered thereby. In “The Masque of Owls” a Puritan tradesman of Coventry is represented as the third owl thus :—

“A pure native bird
 This; and though his hue
 Be Coventre Blue,
 Yet is he undone
 By the thread he has spun.
 For since the wise Town
 Has let the sports down
 Of May games and morris,
 For which he right sorr(y)is;
 Where their maids and their makes, (mates)
 At dancings and wakes,
 Had their napkins and posies
 And the wipers for their noses,
 And their smocks, all bewrought
 With his thread which they bought;
 It now lies in his hands,
 And having neither wit or lands,
 Is ready to hang or choke him
 In a skein of that (which) has broke him.”

The King’s late adherents were now compelled to compound with the Parliament for their estates, and Sir Thomas Leigh was fined £4,895; James, Earl Northampton, £1,572; Sir Clement Fisher £840; and Sir William Dugdale £168. The Parliament did not forget to reward its friends, and, on petition, Colonel Purefoy received £1,000 for losses and pay.

Cromwell, finding Parliament untractable, and anticipating a plot to destroy his power, dissolved the Assembly 22nd January, 1655, eleven days prior to the appointed time. His ambition inclined to support with force the dignity conferred upon him,

in spite of plots and plotters. He resolved to call a Parliament, the Members of which he could depend upon to use their authority to establish his own, rather than a free Parliament. To that which met 17th September, 1656, Coventry had again for its representatives

WILLIAM PUREFOY AND ROBERT BEAKE.

On Cromwell requiring all Members to subscribe to do no act prejudicial to his government, many returned home. During this Parliament a party was formed to ask the Protector to accept the office of King, of which Major Beake, now Mayor as well as Member for Coventry, was a chief projector, but at length "His Highness" absolutely refused the tempting offer of "Kingship."

There are several letters of Mr. Beake to the Aldermen amongst the Coventry Corporation MSS. ; one under date 19th August, 1656, desires that Alderman James Nailer (with whom he had acted as Sheriff in 1651-2) should not be chosen to succeed him as Mayor, as Mr. Nailer was engaged in a law-suit, nothing but the termination of which could qualify him for the office. He was, however, chosen Mayor in 1656. Mr. Beake desired the Council House to remedy the non-payment of the local Ministers, as they (the Council) were the "very sinues of it." Some dissatisfaction existed with the conduct of the Judges, and on 23rd February, 1657-8, he advised that at all hazards they should be paid their fees when they came on circuit, least the consequences be hurtful.

In a letter written at Caldecote 24th April, 1658, the Recorder desires that his servant, Thomas Simmons, should be admitted a Freeman of Coventry, and whilst recommending him on the ground that his wife and brother were connected with the City, says nothing further about his proper qualification.

Cromwell's "Other House" was summoned 20th January, 1657-8. He desired it to be considered as the "House of Peers," and it consisted chiefly of officers, or persons, entirely devoted to him, for some of the former Peers, whom he added, refused to take their seats. The Commons, composed chiefly of Independents, Republicans, Enthusiasts, and Fifth Monarchy men, soon began to talk of pulling down Churches, destroying the clergy, and upsetting a National Church ; and the Presbyterians, in great dread of extremities, were relieved when the Protector dissolved Parliament 4th February, 1657-8, but before another Assembly could be called, Cromwell died 3rd September, 1658, and was buried with kingly honours at Westminster Abbey.

CHAPTER XXII.

RECALLING "THE REMNANT."

The Commonwealth, continued (1659-60).

Richard Cromwell, Protector—A Parliament called—William Purefoy and Robert Beake chosen—The Assembly dissolved—Richard resigns—The Long Parliament recalled by the officers—Messrs. Jesson and Barker—Purefoy's last letter to Mayor—His actions on Sir George Booth's rising—Dr. Grew in opposition—Troops left at Coventry—The Remnant dismissed—Again restored—General Monk's progress—Major Beake, and Coventry, declare for a free Parliament—Oath of abjuration—Refused by Chief Justice St. John and General Monk—Purefoy's reported death—His repentance—No tomb to him in Caldecote Church—Chief Justice St. John chosen Recorder—Biography—General Monk sides with London—Disobliges the Parliament—Admits his friends, the excluded Members—Chief Justice placed on new Council of State—Abolishing the Oath—The General refuses sovereign power—Declares for the King's restoration—Close of the Long or "Remnant" Parliament.



CROMWELL had appointed his son Richard to succeed him as Protector, and a Parliament was called to meet 27th January, 1659, whereto

WILLIAM PUREFOY AND ROBERT BEAKE

were again returned for Coventry. The House acknowledged Richard as Protector, but did not entirely endorse the existing order of things. The Republican minority soon united with the army officers, and forced him to dissolve it on the 22nd April. He resigned in May following.

The nation was weary with the change of rulers. The officers of the army were plotting for power, and their Council now invited the Members of the Long Parliament, by letters, to resume duty at Westminster on 7th May, when, after a lapse of nearly six years, between seventy and eighty attended the House. In 1640-1 Coventry had chosen

WILLIAM JESSON AND JOHN BARKER.

The former was apparently yet living, but the latter is stated to have been again refused admittance, together with Sir George Booth and others, who before time were excluded by the army. The Remnant paid Richard Cromwell's debts, and he wisely retired from public life. By their first declaration, the Commonwealth was continued without "a single person, Kingship, or House of Peers," and an Act of oblivion followed.

On 6th June, Colonel Purefoy, in a letter to the Mayor of Coventry, desired that his fee as Recorder might be given towards the repairs of the glass in Bablake Church, destroyed by the Scots prisoners; and "I shall not fayle," he says, "God willinge, to

employe the uttermost of my power for the service of the Citye in the business now in hande."

In August Sir George Booth appeared in arms, demanded a free Parliament, and surprised Chester. Noble, in his "*Lives of the English Regicides*," tells how assiduous Colonel Purefoy was in the matter, saying that "when the nation was attempting to shake off the oppressive load of the Long Parliament and declare for the King, he, though old, and with one foot in the grave, employed such diligence at the time of Sir George Booth's rising that he kept the City of Coventry, of which he was Governor, and the adjacent country in obedience to Parliament." Yet not without opposition, for Dr. Grew, of St. Michael's, refused to read the proclamation against the insurgents in his Church on the Sabbath, although threatened with the loss of place by Lambert's soldiers. When the insurrection was put down, and the army passed through Coventry, two companies of infantry and some cavalry were left to silence further opposition.

The Royalists were greatly profiting by the dissensions of their opponents. Parliament endeavoured to re-model the army, and voted the principal officers out of their commissions, but the latter placed guards at the doors of the House on the 13th October, and refusing the Members admittance, assumed government, but "the Remnant" was again restored on the 26th December following.

George Monk, the Parliament's General in Scotland, had been consulted privately as to the King's restoration, but the matter was too hazardous for him to declare himself. However, as the Parliament had been re-established, he and his army crossed the border on 1st January, 1660, ostensibly to aid it, and proceeded to London. He received many addresses on the way, desiring either that the vacancies in the present Assembly should be filled up, or that a free Parliament should be called. Coventry was no idle spectator, and "on December 26th, 1659, Major Robert Beake declared in favour of a free Parliament. In a very short space of time, notwithstanding the presence of a number of soldiers, who were sent from the Committee of Safety, he was joined by a majority of the citizens, with such weapons as they could immediately procure. The Mayor (Richard Hicks) also armed the townsmen from the magazine in St. Mary's Hall in the same cause. They were afterwards drawn up by their Major in St. Michael's churchyard, from whence they marched to Cross Cheaping, where they demanded the guard of the City from the Parliamentary troops, who resigned them to Captain Hicks, Major Beake, and other Aldermen. The Parliament's forces in the Town also declared for a free Parliament; and soon afterwards, Colonel Hacker; who came to protect the City by order of Parliament; joined in the same cause."

The Long Parliament now required its Members and others to take an oath of obedience to the Commonwealth and against the King, in far more stringent terms than heretofore had been taken. Lord Chief Justice St. John, and other Members refused to take it, as did General Monk.

Colonel Purefoy is said to have died at this time, and to have expressed "great penitence at the last for the part he had acted towards his late Majesty." No monument now exists in Caldecote Church in memory of the regicide, and it is doubtful if Purefoy died before the Restoration; yet, in a moated area at Ansley, not far removed, there existed up to 1791, two tombs, erected to members of his family, in a vault beneath an arbour, which have since disappeared.

The Council House at Coventry now chose Lord Chief Justice St. John, for its Recorder, and he accepted the office on 17th February. The son of a Bedfordshire gentleman, he was brought up to the law, and sat in the House for Bedford County in 1628 and Totnes in 1640. To conciliate the Country party, Charles made him Solicitor-General, but removed him three years after for opposing his views. Acting as Hampden's counsel in the Ship Case, and managing Stafford's impeachment, the Parliament gave its Member various offices, and in 1648 he became Lord Chief Justice of Common Pleas, but is said to have largely accepted bribes. Allied to Cromwell by marriage, he became a Member of "the Other House." He opposed "the Protectorship," but favoured "the Kingship" being given to Cromwell. In 1651 he was sent as Ambassador at the Hague, having £10,000 a year, and forty servants, allowed him. His reception was a bad one, and meeting the Duke of York at a turnstile near Verhout, in a struggle for precedence, the Duke snatching his hat, threw it in his face, saying, "Learn, parricide, to respect the brother of your King!" to which St. John, drawing his sword, retorted, "I regard you, and the person you speak of, as but a race of fugitives!" but a conflict was stayed by the intervention of the spectators. On the re-assembling of "the Remnant" he took his seat for Totnes, and supported the Parliament against the army's tyranny. From his moody character he was called "the dark lanthorn man," whilst a contemporary describes him as "a dusky, tough man, whose fanaticism, crabbed logic, and dark ambition, issue all in dreaded avarice at last."

The Long Parliament continued sitting, but General Monk disoblged them in their orders with reference to London, and joined the citizens in open defiance. A great number of Parliament men, including the excluded Members, flocked around him, and he became all-powerful. The General and officers admitted the secluded Members to the House, and Parliament thereupon appointed a new Council of State, on which the Chief Justice was appointed, and next abolished the Oath of abjuration. Some of the old regicide Members, fearing for their heads if the King was restored, in vain offered General Monk sovereign power. He refused it, but studiously concealed his sentiments until a few days before the calling together of the new Parliament, when he revealed them to Sir John Grenville, the King's envoy, as in favour of His Majesty's restoration. The Commons Journals show, that the Long Parliament sat until dissolved on the 16th March, by a special Bill prepared for that purpose, and for the calling together of another Assembly on the 25th April, 1660.

CHAPTER XXIII.

"THE CONVENTION PARLIAMENT" AND THE RESTORATION.

Charles II. (1660-61).

An opposed election—Robert Beake and Richard Hopkins chosen—Lambert's escape—His attempt on Coventry frustrated—Meeting of "the Convention"—The King's restoration agreed upon—Rejoicings at Coventry—The Civic presents—The Steward knighted—Honours—The Park withheld—Petitions decided—A new election ordered—William Jesson and Richard Hopkins chosen—Account of the latter—Trial of the Regicides—Colonel Purefoy—Retirement and removal of Recorder St. John—James, Earl of Northampton chosen—The chief enactments of "the Convention"—Its dissolution.



OUR candidates entered the field ; Robert Beake, and another whose name does not appear, opposed William Jesson and Richard Hopkins. The latter were prepared to favour the King's return, but at the choice on 30th March, 1660,

ROBERT BEAKE AND RICHARD HOPKINS

were returned.

Colonel Lambert having escaped from the Tower, was actively corresponding with his party. Projecting a rising in Warwickshire at Easter, he wrote to Mr. Nathaniel Hobson, of Coventry, to enlist men, and proposed to seize and garrison the City in his interest ; but General Monk, having private information of the design, placed two companies of the regiments of Colonels Howard and Streater in the Town, and Colonel Ingoldsby encountering Lambert on the road between Daventry and Coventry, took him prisoner, and prevented a dangerous rising.

When "the Convention Parliament" met 25th April, it contained a majority of Royalists and Presbyterians. It was a properly-constituted Assembly, and the Members quickly agreed to the King's restoration. Charles II. was proclaimed at Westminster on 8th May, and entered London on the 28th. Meanwhile, petitions from Coventry were read declaring the return of the Members illegal, and an inquiry was instituted by Parliament into the matter.

Most of the Coventry citizens looked favourably upon the restoration, for, like London and Bristol, they hoped for relief thereby from the oppressive taxes of the Commonwealth. When the Mayor, Thomas Basnett, read the proclamation at the Cross, Aldermen and citizens alike "seemed almost frantic" with excitement, and amidst "the cheers, firing of salutes, ringing of bells, beating of drums, braying of trumpets, and bonfires in every street," a contagion seized the people. Although there

were some "crabbed fanatics" amongst the Council, the Mayor gave a banquet, and the Council Chamber sent its Steward, Mr. Richard Hopkins, Senr., and a deputation to Whitehall, in order to express the City's loyal attachment to His Majesty, and present a silver basin and ewer (costing one hundred and fifty guineas), together with a purse of gold, as presents. The King withheld the lease of the Park, which the Council anxiously desired, but subsequently knighted the Steward.

Amongst the honours conferred at this time by the King, Coventry men shared, and John Hales and Thomas Norton were created Baronets.

Meanwhile, the case of Coventry's election was enquired into. The Sheriffs and many witnesses were subpoenaed to London to give evidence, and the return of the Members was declared void. A new election took place on 14th August, at which the same persons were nominated, and considerable strife again existed amongst partisans.

WILLIAM JESSON AND RICHARD HOPKINS

were chosen, and a note in the State papers admits, that whilst the persons returned at the former election, had few hands at this; honest men had been chosen, who were "loyal to the King, but not friends of Bishops, turning out goodly Ministers, and the like."

The Members were related by marriage. Mr. Richard Hopkins, Senr., afterwards Sir Richard, was the eldest son of Mr. Sampson Hopkins, Mayor, 1609. He was eminent at the Bar, became a Sergeant-at-Law, and having corresponded with Charles, when in extremities, gained the King's confidence.

The trial of the regicides occurred in May. Whilst it is doubtful whether Colonel Purefoy was dead, or in hiding, evidence was heard against him, and in June, the House voted to spare his life, but some of his estates became forfeited. Chief Justice St. John at this time retired to his house at Longthorp, Northamptonshire, and being deprived of holding office in England, ceased to be Recorder of Coventry. He died at Utrecht in 1673. The Recordership was filled by the appointment of James Compton, Earl of Northampton, the son of a former Recorder. This nobleman, when Member for Warwickshire in 1641, voted against Lord Strafford's attainder, and was subsequently expelled the House. He distinguished himself under the Royal banner, and on the entry of Charles II. into London, headed a band of two hundred gentlemen to receive the King.

The chief enactments of Parliament after the King's arrival in England was an Act of Pardon and Indemnity for whatever had passed since the outbreak of the Civil War, the arrangement of the claims of property which had changed hands, with the settlement of the Church and the Royal revenue. Parliament was liberal to the King, yet the Presbyterians placed a check upon the other Members. They did not approve of the militia being entirely at his disposal, neither would they tamely submit to see the Bishops in Parliament. His Majesty dissolved "the Convention" on 29th December, 1660, and writs were issued for a new Assembly to meet on 8th May following.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A CAVALIER PARLIAMENT: DESTRUCTION OF THE CITY WALLS.

Charles II., continued (1661 to 1678).

The Recorder's choice—Not approved—Sir Clement Fisher and Mr. Thomas Flynt chosen—Their Biography—Mrs. Jane Lane—Becomes Lady Fisher—Mr. Flynt's letter—"The Cavalier" Parliament—The Crown's Authority and the Church of England re-established—Mr. N. Hobson and the Mayoralty—The Corporation Act and the Council House—The troubles of a late Member—Destruction of the Town walls—Dinners and toasts—Sir Robert Townsend obtains Cheylesmore—The Clarendon Code—Removal of Presbyterian Ministers—Institution of Episcopalians—Death of Mr. Flynt—A bye-election—Sir Robert Townsend for the Court—Withdraws—Mr. Richard Hopkins, Junr., chosen—The Coventry Act—Dr. Grew licensed to teach—Cancelled—The Test Act—Oath taking and the Privy Council—Mistrusting the King's designs—Secretary Coventry and Mr. Hopkins thereon—The more regular enrolment of the Freemen.

WORD NORTHAMPTON desired the return of Sir Charles Wheeler, a Warwickshire gentleman, who had done considerable service for the King. The Council House objected that he was "a pensioner," and the Recorder replied that the favours he had received were "for sufferings and services in the late war," but he knew him to be "a zealous Protestant and an abhorrer of Popery." As the objection was not overcome, Sir Clement Fisher, of Packington, and Mr. Thomas Flynt, of Allesley, were brought by the Court party to oppose the Members of the late Parliament. The loss of the Park was felt by the Freemen, and as Mr. Flynt was acting for the Council, and both he and Sir Clement had signed the petition of the County gentry asking the King to lease it to the City, the Court candidates were popular. At the close of the election two indentures were sent up, but on the 15th April, 1661, one having been withdrawn,

SIR CLEMENT FISHER, BART., AND THOMAS FLYNT, ESQ.,
became Members.

Sir Clement Fisher was descended from an honourable Warwickshire family, settled at Packington. The register of baptism in the Church there records that

"Clement fisher the sonne of Sir Robert ffisher and Dame Elizabeth his wyfe,
baptised ye 9th Daie of March. Ano Dom 1613."

Succeeding to the family estates, he entertained Charles I. at Packington on the 18th October, 1642, whilst the King was on the way from Aston to Edge Hill, and had



Mrs. Jane Lane.

LADY JANE FISHER,
MRS. JANE LANE, (who saved CHARLES II. after the Battle of Worcester), wife of
SIR CLEMENT FISHER, Bart.
Died, 1689.



*James Compton, Earl of Northampton.
Drawing by Silvestro Tordini from a picture at
Castle Ashby. The seat of the Earl of Northampton.*

JAMES COMPTON, EARL OF NORTHAMPTON.
Recorder of Coventry, 1660-1.
Died, 1681.

suffered, as has been shewn, for his loyalty. His house, now the Old Hall, is an interesting red brick and stone structure ; the hall, with its open hearth ; the kitchen, with ovens and fireplace ; the moulded ceilings, in which, amidst devices, are interwoven the initials C and J F, with the Fisher arms and crest ; the polished oak staircase, and that ancient requisite to a gentleman's house of the period—the hiding-hole, eight feet square by six feet high. Sir Clement is traditionally said to have secretly entertained Charles II. at the house after Worcester fight, in September, 1651, when travelling in disguise from Bentley to Bristol as the servant of Mrs. Jane Lane, to whom the King owed so much for his preservation. This lady, soon after the Restoration, became the wife of Sir Clement Fisher ; but the story of her heroism being a matter of history, needs no recital of details here. When it became known, she hastily quitted England, by walking to Yarmouth in disguise, and taking ship, arrived in Paris, where the King welcomed her as his preserver, and introduced the lady to his Queen. His Majesty afterwards presented his portrait, and other mementos, to Mrs. Lane. In the last Parliament Sir Clement Throgmorton introduced her case, and Mr. Trevor moved that £1,000 be given to her to buy a commemorative jewel, which Sir Richard Hopkins had seconded ; but the King and the next Parliament were more liberal, and settled £1,000 per annum upon the lady for life. This was paid irregularly, and at the Revolution, the Commons Journals contain “the petition of Lady Jane Lane, now Fisher,” asking that in the Bill then passing concerning King William's revenues, the annuity might be retained to her. Two pictures of Lady Fisher exist at Packington, in which she is shown as shielding a Crown with her veil, emblematical of saving the King. In the eyes of the Royalists, the best return Coventry could make the new Monarch for having chosen a regicide in the past, was at this time to elect the husband of His Majesty's preserver. Sir Clement died 15th September, 1683, and Lady Jane 9th September, 1689.

Mr. Thomas Flynt was an eminent lawyer and sergeant-at-law. In 1664 he became chosen Recorder of Tamworth, and had a rent-roll of £700 per annum. He lived at Allesley, near Coventry, where, as his memorial records, he was “Lord of the Manor and Patron of the Church.” During the latter part of the Commonwealth he had considerable practice, but became a loyalist, and expected Knighthood. In a letter to the Coventry Council House, 13th July, 1661, Mr. Flynt, referring to the Coventry Park and other matters, tells how he had attended Lord Chancellor Clarendon, to show the Council's letter and petition to the King, before its presentation. But the Earl, who was their “good friend,” had suggested certain alterations. He would see about the Bill in the Exchequer, and desired that a petition from the City, sent to the Lord Treasurer, might be withdrawn, as it had given offence.

Parliament met on the 8th May, 1661, and from the number of the King's friends returned, it has been called the “Cavalier Parliament.” As a very considerable

number of the Members are said to have received pay or presents from the Court, it has been known as the "Pensioners' Parliament;" and from its having sat sixteen years, eight months, and sixteen days, it is sometimes called the "Long Parliament." This Assembly, relieved of the Presbyterians, promptly re-established the authority of the Crown and the Church of England.

The year 1661 was ushered in with the insurrection of the Fifth Monarchy men, and when Parliament assembled, the Earl of Clarendon reported upon a conspiracy, stating that the Anabaptists had intended to surprise London, Shrewsbury, Coventry, and Bristol. Troops were sent to those places, who dispersed "a knot of thieves and took various persons prisoners." Information was given against Mr. N. Hobson, a butcher, of Coventry, whom some of the Council House intended to make Mayor. He had been a notorious actor in Lambert's rebellion, and called the King "the common enemy, Charles Stuart." At the insurrection of the Fifth Monarchy men, he concealed arms, in spite of the Deputy-Lieutenant's proclamation to bring them to the magazine, and called the "Parliament mad for passing the Corporation Bill." By this Act it was proposed to destroy the power of the Dissenters in the towns. All officers of Corporations were enforced to receive the Sacrament within twelve months of their election to office, and, when elected, to take oaths of supremacy, allegiance, and non-resistance, and abjure the Solemn League and Covenant. Commissioners were appointed under the Act to visit the Corporations, and remove such persons as were suspected to be unfavourable to the King, or the Church of England. The Coventry Council House, in November, 1662, had chosen Mr. Hobson as Mayor. He refused, however, to take the oaths, was fined for non-serving, and imprisoned for a fortnight. The fine, £100, was eventually paid, but he received back £85 from the Council House, who, to further recoup their member for any loss, gave him a ninety-nine years' lease of the house he lived in, together with two shops in the Butcher Row adjoining, to the damage of the Bablake Boys' Hospital of "at least £800."

The late Member, Mr. Barker, having lost his whole estate during the late civil troubles, sent letters to the Council House at intervals appealing for pecuniary assistance. Although he had spent hundreds of pounds for the City's good when in Parliament, his late *confreres* generosity was but small; and to such a low condition had he become reduced, that in 1670, when 79 years of age, whilst lamenting that he had not died before time, he earnestly asks for a small grant of fifty shillings every three months to support him so long as he should live.

The Commissioners appointed by Parliament to put the Corporation Act into force used such rigour that there were few officers left in any community who did not acquiesce in the principles of the Parliament, and along with Gloucester, Northampton, and Leicester; Coventry for its zeal against Monarchy, was to have its walls destroyed. On the 22nd July, 1662, Earl Northampton, attended by the neighbouring gentry

and five hundred troops, commenced to demolish them, making the first breach at New Gate, where the Cavaliers before time had been repulsed. The nearly three-mile belt of stout stone walling was irreparably destroyed. There were twelve gates and thirty-two towers upon the line of the wall, some of which, however, escaped demolition. During the destruction the Mayor, Aldermen, and Members of the newly-purged Council under the Corporation Act, dined with the Earl and gentry, and whilst the Recorder toasted "the Mayor," the Mayor gave "the King," to the blast of six trumpets. In August, Northampton gave orders for the disposal of the fallen gates and walls, which the Aldermen, as his deputies, saw carried out. The stone lying upon the ground at Cheylesmore, was given by the King to Sir Robert Townsend, who now came into possession of the Manor House.

The Clarendon Code of Acts—the Corporation Act, 1661; the Act of Uniformity, 1662; the Conventicle Act, and the Five Mile Act, 1665—pressed heavily upon the Presbyterians and Nonconformists at Coventry, and Drs. Grew and Bryan, who had been appointed by the Parliament to St. Michael's and Holy Trinity Churches, were ejected in November, 1662. Bishop Hackett earnestly desired them to conform, but, on their final refusal, appointed moderate clergymen to succeed.

Mr. Flynt died in October, 1670, aged 57, and was buried in Allesley Church. A bye-election became necessary to fill the vacancy. Sir Robert Townsend, Knt., of Cheylesmore Manor House, came forward in the Court interest, and was opposed by Mr. Richard Hopkins, Junr., the son of the late Member. The Townsends were related to the Berkeleys, of Caludon, and the Cravens, of Combe. A Coventry resident informs us that Sir Robert "begged the great Park of the King to make a garden plot of," and, "although he promised to consider the question of a lease of it for the citizens' use, never gave one." The contest was of three days' duration, but Mr. Hopkins made the running, whereupon "Ascue, friend and deputy to Sir Robert Townsend, commanded those that voted for him to desist from coming to the Court to be polled, and gave notice thereto, by one Robert Gilbert to that purpose, and did command Thomas Rose also to thank those to forbear voting if any more came for Sir Robert." On the 1st November the result appeared—

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----|-----|-------|
| For Mr. Richard Hopkins | ... | ... | 643 |
| „ Sir Robert Townsend, Knt. | ... | ... | 294 |
| | | | <hr/> |
| Majority | ... | ... | 349 |

and on the same day

MR. RICHARD HOPKINS

was declared elected.

The Member for Weymouth, Sir John Coventry, having been waylaid and disgracefully handled by some soldiers sent by the Court, in revenge for some jesting

words spoken in Parliament reflecting on the King, the House passed the Statute known as "the Coventry Act," making mutilation a capital crime.

By the Act to suppress seditious Conventicles, 1670, if five persons beyond the members of a household met to exercise religion other than that of the Church of England, a fine was to be inflicted on persons found attending, but the next year the King agreed that a certain number of places should be allowed for Nonconformist worship, but not for Papist. Dr. Grew returned to Coventry, and was licensed to teach, but in March, 1672, a proclamation cancelled the indulgences, on its being found that some of the Ministers preached against the Government.

The Houses, in 1673, passed the Test Act, requiring every person in office or employment to take the oaths of allegiance and supremacy, receive the Sacrament according to the rites of the Church of England, and subscribe a declaration against transubstantiation. In March, 1679, the Privy Council wrote to the Mayor, etc., of Coventry, for a return of persons not taking the oaths of supremacy and allegiance.

The Commons mistrusted the King, and though they were prepared to grant money for his wars, were afraid if they gave it, he would use the money for other purposes. Seeing the growing power of the French King, they desired His Majesty should make alliances, in order to secure England and the Netherlands. When the King asked the House to enable him to prepare for war, Secretary Coventry asked: "What if the King make alliances with the one hand, and offend with the other? A man would have his servant go a journey, but will not have him engage in it till he be provided with boots and horses." "Are we assured," aptly asked Mr. Hopkins, "he would go that journey when he has boots and horses provided?" to which Coventry replied by asking the question, "Would it be wisdom in the King to tell you what journey he would go, or that he would go a journey without being provided for it?"


The year 1668 saw the more regular enrolment of the Freemen of Coventry commenced. By Act of Leet, every apprentice was required to enter his name in a book kept by the City Sword Bearer for the purpose, and to pay fourpence. At the expiration of his seven years term, on being sworn a Freeman, he had again to sign a book, and pay a fee of sixpence for the entry.

CHAPTER XXV.

ORIGIN OF "WHIG" AND "TORY;" THE SURRENDER OF THE CHARTER.

Charles II., continued (1678 to 1685).

The "Cavalier" Parliament dissolved—A contest—Richard Hopkins and Robert Beake chosen—Mr. Feilding's Petition—Parliament and the Duke of York—A sudden dissolution—Mr. Richard Hopkins and Mr. John Stratford returned—Account of the latter—"Petitioners" and "Abhorrrers"—Another Parliament called at Oxford—Messrs. Richard Hopkins and John Stratford again chosen—The succession to the Throne—The Act against the Duke passed—Origin of "Whig" and "Tory"—Death of Earl Northampton—Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke, chosen Recorder—Biographical note—His reception at Coventry—Changing the Magistrates—Calling for the City's Charter—Its surrender—The King's objects in calling for it—Prosecutions—Deaths of Sir Richard Hopkins, and of the King.

HE King, finding the disposition of the Parliament against him, dissolved it on the 24th January, 1678, and forthwith summoned another to meet on the 6th of March following. The candidates at Coventry were Mr. Richard Hopkins and Mr. Robert Beake, for the Country party; and Mr. Robert Feilding, a relative of the Earl of Denbigh, for the Court. At Coventry the Presbyterians, though oppressed, were numerous, and a stout contest resulted, on the 11th February, in two indentures being returned. Mr. Feilding petitioned against the unwarrantable practices of the Sheriffs at the elections, and of their returning his opponents, but no enquiry appears to have been made into the matter, and

MESSRS. RICHARD HOPKINS AND ROBERT BEAKE

became the Members.

Extraordinary exertions were made by both parties to influence the elections, but the opponents of the Court prevailed. The zealous attachment of James, Duke of York (the heir presumptive of the Crown), to the Roman Catholic religion alarmed the Commons, and the King tried to coerce them with prorogations, and in other ways, and finally dissolved both Houses on the 12th July, 1679.

A new Parliament at length met at Westminster on the 17th October following, to which Coventry returned

MR. RICHARD HOPKINS AND MR. JOHN STRATFORD

on the 26th of August. Many petitions for the speedy commencement of a Session were presented to the King (including one from Coventry), which Charles prohibited. The Court Party, in numberless addresses to him, expressed abhorrence at their

the Tory party who had placed him in power, and exposed Churchmen to trouble. His labours to repeal the Test Act, ostensibly to relieve the Dissenters, were for the benefit of his Roman Catholic subjects, and the making of officers, in his camp at Hounslow chiefly from that party, alarmed the nation.

When Parliament was dissolved on the 2nd July, 1687, the King took measures for securing the choice of such persons for the new Assembly as should pay implicit obedience to him. He closetted individuals, and used arguments, threats, and promises to refractory Corporations. His motives were to gain the Nonconformists, and in the end establish Roman Catholicism as the State religion. During the summer the King visited several Counties, and endeavoured to persuade the nobility, gentry, Magistrates, and Authorities to comply with his schemes. At Oxford he behaved with indecent warmth to his Collegiate opponents. Twenty-five persons were afterwards expelled from Fellowships, and friends of Romanism introduced. When he visited Coventry on the 1st September, a numerous cavalcade of Whigs and Dissenters rode to meet him at Meriden, whilst Sir Thomas Norton, the Deputy-Lieutenant, with a party of Tories and Churchmen, awaited his arrival at Guphillford, the limit of the County of Coventry, and the late Member made an excellent speech of welcome. James reached Spon-bar gates at five in the evening, when Mr. Septimus Bott, the Mayor, with the Aldermen, and the Companies with their attendants, streamers, and "*magnificolibus*," received him, and Mr. Feilding, the City Steward, made a dutiful oration. The Mayor gave up, and received again, the Civic sword, and presented His Majesty with a gold cup and cover, costing nearly £200, which the King gave to his Admiral, George Legge, Lord Dartmouth, declaring, "I would have your Lordship receive this gift as a mark of the City of Coventry's concern for your father in times past," an action, and speech, which caused considerable murmuring in the City Council Chamber. The King was to have stayed at the White Friars, but His Majesty preferred the house of Mr. Richard Hopkins, in Earl Street, in order to gratify the Whig party, and stayed there, declaring his desire "to be with his people in the midst of the Town, rather than lodge on the outskirts." "The Palace Yard" was a residence of considerable proportions, and obtained its name from the Royal visitants attending it. It was built around a spacious Courtyard, and had some pleasant pleasure-gardens behind. In the room over the second archway, James is said to have held a levee, at which such of the neighbouring nobility and gentry as attended were received. He enquired into the dispositions of the various Members of the Council House, and in the morning attended the Mayor and Aldermen, and visited the Cross and the Churches. When "he touched at St. Michael's Church," says the diary of a Coventry resident, "so great was the throng, that the very galleries crack't again." He breakfasted at St. Mary's Hall, and mounting horse at his lodgings, was accompanied on his way by the Mayor and his brethren, through New Gate, to Baginton Bridge, where they left him. All the King's endeavours to gain over the nobility,

gentry, and Corporate Bodies failed. Even the Dissenters mistrusted him, and the experience of the whole journey was such that he dare not hazard the calling of a new Parliament.

The Royal visit was followed with very irregular proceedings. Mr. Rogers was elected Mayor in November, and Messrs. Edward Rawson and John Bennett, Sheriffs. "But King James willing to gratifie the Dissenters, these above-mentioned Sheriffs were soon put out, and S. Diston, mercer, and John Snell, maltster, were put in their room." In July following the King granted liberty of conscience to all, and the Dissenters had sermons preached every Sunday by Mr. John Shewall, and Mr. Gervase Bryan, at Leather Hall. In September and October following, when the coming of the Prince of Orange was talked about, the old Charter was restored. Mr. Rogers was turned out, and Mr. Alderman Laurence, who was Mayor when the old Charter had been taken away, was again made Mayor. All the Aldermen that were Churchmen, excepting Nathaniel Harryman and John Daniel, were turned out, and Dissenters put in their places. Amongst the Corporation MSS. are the orders of the King in Council for these removals of Members under the Charter; that of the 13th January deposed Richard Hayward, Alderman; John Bennett, Sheriff; Simon Burton, Coroner; Joseph Norton and William Benyon, Bailiffs, and collectors of the City and Hospital rents; and that of 27th November removed Messrs. S. Bott, E. Bradney, G. Elliott, T. King, Aldermen; C. Oadhams, a Council House man; Basil Feilding, Steward; Simon Burton, Clerk to the Council House; and Edward Rawson, Sheriff. In November, Francis Cater was chosen Mayor, but within a little time, the power of the Prince of Orange being feared, he was turned out, and Mr. Snell chosen in his stead.

In September, the Prince of Orange published his declaration of coming to England, to secure the religious and civil rights of the people, and the holding of a free Parliament. There were riots in London and elsewhere, and various Romish Chapels were destroyed. Small-pox raged at Coventry, and many persons died daily. Associations were formed amongst the nobility and gentry, and in the army, favourable to the Prince, who landed at Torbay on November 15th. Within a week, Lord Churchill, the Duke of Grafton, and many officers deserted to the Prince, and the King, on his return to London; found he was abandoned by George, Prince of Denmark, to whom his daughter Anne was married, and that the Princess herself, influenced by Protestant zeal and the persuasion of Lady Churchill, had privately quitted the Palace, in order to join the Prince's partizans. She came to Coventry on 11th December, accompanied by the Earl of Devonshire, the Bishop of London, and many of the nobility and gentry. William Snell, the Mayor, Sheriffs, and Aldermen met Her Highness at Bishop Gate, where the Steward, Mr. Thomas Hopkins, addressed her. She was conducted to the "Palace Yard," and stayed there two days, going from thence to Warwick Castle.

The City was very desirous of regaining the use of Coventry Park, and looked

upon the Townend family as intruders. The old Cavalier, Sir Robert Townend, or Townshend, was the first Knight made after the Restoration. His first wife was Lady Ann Spencer, daughter of William, Lord Spencer, Wormleighton; his second, Mary, daughter of Henry Ascue, a Yorkshire landowner. His son and successor, Mr. Anthony Townsend, had married Mary, daughter of Sir John Dugdale, of Blythe Hall. The diary of Mr. Humphrey Wanley gives the following particulars of a riot at Coventry about the Park, at this time :—

“Many years since, Robert Townsend, Kt., had begged the great Park (adjoining to this City) of King Charles II. to make a garden plot of, as 'tis reported, but he being dead, Anthony Townsend, Esq., inherited the same, but towards the latter end of November, the Prince of Orange's forces increasing, everybody almost being distressed, and trading being very low, the apprentices of this City, under the leading of Joseph Eburne, glover—and afterwards, within three or four days, of John Oneley, apprentice to Alderman Richard Hayward, ironmonger—attempted to pull the hedges of the Park down, which was now divided into closes and let to several people, and forwarded their work so well, that notwithstanding all opposition that Townsend and his friends could make either here or at the Parliament House, they took, 'tis said, £120 and upwards in putting cattle at 4d. a week a horse, and 2d. a week a cow, for three months; and at Michaelmas they put in again for 2d. a week a horse, and 1d. a week a cow, for three months; but the said John Oneley died of the small-pox soon after the first putting in. This business of the Park caused many copies of the gift of the said Park (extant on a brazen plate fixed to a stone pillar in St. Mary's Hall in this City) to be taken.”

On November 30th, the King published a proclamation for a Parliament to assemble on 15th January following, but on the 11th of December left Whitehall in disguise, and fled from England.

On the disbanding of the King's army on the 18th December, a report spread that “the wild Irish” had landed, and were coming towards Coventry, having on their way cut off 1,000 men sent by the Prince against them. It proved, however, to be false, and was caused by some of the disbanded soldiers having pillaged a baker's shop in their hunger at Uxbridge. Some indeed came to the City, and lay at Bridewell, “but dieted in Bablake Church, where they proved most unmerciful eaters.”

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE PARLIAMENT (CONVENTION) OF ENGLAND: LOCAL INCIDENTS.

William and Mary (1689-90).

King James abdication—"The Convention"—Sir Roger Cave and John Stratford chosen—The Whigs triumphant—King William and Queen Mary proclaimed—Sir Roger Cave's unpopular vote—A Mr. John Stratford and the Warwickshire election—Letter from an old Member—His views on the new Government—The opinion of Sir John Somers asked about the new Charter, etc.—Degeneration of the Council House—Toleration Act—The Town houses, and the local gentry—An account of Coventry in 1702—"Publick stock"—The Presbyterian and Independent Meeting Houses—Dissolution of Parliament.



AFTER the abdication of King James, the Convention met at Westminster on the 22nd January, 1689. Coventry again sent

SIR ROGER CAVE, BART., AND JOHN STRATFORD, ESQ.,

and the return shows them "of Coventry." The aristocracy, Corporations, and people were tired of King James and his Romanising schemes. They changed sides, and the Whigs had a majority in the House. The throne was declared vacant, the Prince of Orange refused to take a Regency, and after passing the declaration of rights, William and Mary were proclaimed King and Queen on the 13th of February. The Convention became changed into a Parliament by a Bill which received the Royal assent, and, as Sir Roger Cave is said to have voted against the Prince of Orange, he became unpopular at Coventry.

Sir Richard Newdigate, Baronet, Richard Verney, Knight, and a John Stratford, Esq., had been nominated for the County of Warwick, and the two former were returned in January, but on the 28th of March "the petition of Edmund Clark and others, on behalf of themselves and the major of the freeholders of the County," was presented to the House, "complaining of the illegal proceedings of the High and Under-Sheriffs at the elections." They had refused to take the petitioners' polls for Mr. Stratford, but no report of any proceedings is to be found.

Robert Beake wrote an interesting letter to Mr. Leonard Piddock, on the 24th of March, from London, the original of which is amongst the MSS. letters of the Corporation. He alludes to the new Authority, the King, the soldiers' dissatisfaction, and the petition of rights, and adds :—

"The Parliament last night, having ye new Government ingrossed before, voted that it should be tendered to His Highness, and it was not a little satisfactory to ye caball that their counsell had so tymely an issue, to such singular industry did they prepare the thing without doors, and with as much prudence managed it within doors. If you would know who they were, I will give you this guess. Then for much of our liberty we may thank Lord Fines, Sir Charles Wolesley, Colonel Jones, Mr. Scott, Lord Montague, Lord Broghill. Sir, I can assure you there is much of the English freedom in this constitution, and I would not have too much prejudice conceived against it upon the account of religion, for although it be not provided for as it ought, yet ye provision is better than what we yet have had, though the text may seem bad, yet I am confident the nature of affairs under this Government will make after laws to converge upon this text, and then it will appear narrower."

The Council House sought the opinion of "the courteous and complaisant" Sir John Somers, Knight (afterwards Lord Chancellor), respecting the appointment of officers under the new Charter. During the year, the Whigs proposed in the Commons vindictive clauses to a Bill for restoring Charters seized or surrendered in the late reign. The Borough Charters were restored, but it would seem that the Aldermen and Council at Coventry had degenerated considerably, for upon a "pole" being taken, to which every gentleman was to pay twenty shillings, and every squire £5, "the Mayor and Aldermen of this City paid twelve pence apiece, because there was not a *gentleman* among them."

The Toleration Act, which was passed in May, relaxed the conditions of the Act of Uniformity, the Five Miles Act, and the Conventicle Act, and exempted many Protestants dissenting from the Church of England from the penalties thereunder on conditions. Meeting Houses were required to be registered, and prevented from insult by a penalty, but whilst it indulged Nonconformists generally and Quakers in particular, no toleration was extended to the Papists, or those who denied the Trinity. Through the Act's inconsistencies, persecution continued to be the rule, toleration the exception, and freedom of conscience granted only in a very capricious fashion.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries some of the local gentry had Town houses in Coventry, the remains of many of which still show their occupants had pleasant resorts, and the memorial tablets in the Churches of the City yet record the occupants names. The Hales family residence at the White Friars was a building of the Tudor period, arranged around a central courtyard, and added to the Monastic buildings. In Much Park Street and Gosford Street some of these residences existed, and the Cravens, of Combe, had a house in the latter, which they sometimes found useful at election times. The Gerys had a residence at one time in Spon Street, and the Groves in Cross Cheaping. The house of the Hopkins family had goodly proportions, and the bulk of it was erected in Stuart times; perhaps some parts were older. It had its buildings around four sides of a central court. Cheylesmore Manor House was situated upon the remains of buildings of Tudor, or earlier, times. The bulk of the better class houses, however, were erected in Little Park Street, where, in spacious buildings far removed from the main roads, with their numerous inns and noisy coach traffic, the

Caves, Stratfords, Bridgemans, Birds, and others took their pleasure; walked in the prim gardens attached to their residences (as shewn in Buck's view, 1748), and laid out after the newly-introduced fashion from the Continent; or took their pleasure in the Coventry Park adjoining, unless when driven away from the Town; when the plague, or the small-pox, forced their removal. The Town houses generally presented a very picturesque appearance, especially in High Street, and had a considerable quantity of wood used in their construction, with many quaint gables and windows. Speaking of Cross Cheaping in 1702, a writer says: "This is ye biggest place in ye Town, and ye streete, very broad, runs off a great length, and most of ye streets are very good. Ye buildings are mostly of timber work, and old. There is a water house at the end of ye Town wch springs does supply by pipes ye Town with water, in ye manner London is. There is also a water wch serves severall mills yt belong to the Town; it seems to be a thriving, good trading Town, and is very rich. They have a great publick stock belonging to ye Corporation, above three thousand pounds a year for public schools, charity, and ye maintainance of ye severall publick expenses of their Magistrates and Companyes; the majority of the heads are now in ye sober men, so it's esteemed a fanatick Town, and there is indeed ye largest Chapple, and ye greatest number of people, I have ever seen of ye Presbyterian way. There is another Meeting Place in ye Town of ye Independents, wch is not so bigg, but tho' they may differ in some small things, in ye maine they agree, and seem to love one another, wch was no small satisfaction to me, charity and love to ye brethren being ye characteristicall marke of Christ's true disciples."

Parliament was prorogued on the 27th January, and dissolved on the 6th of February following.



CHAPTER XXVIII.

WILLIAMITES AND JACOBITES.

William and Mary, continued (1689-90 to 1694).

King James in Ireland—Troops passing through Coventry—A new Parliament called—Party colours—Richard Hopkins, Esq., and John Stratford, Esq., returned—Mr. Thomas Gery's petition—Plots and plotters—War with France—Parliament assembles—Prince George—King William at Coventry—Goes to Ireland—The Queen's messenger—A stupid hoax—Battle of the Boyne—King's return—Rejoicings and "illuminations"—Mr. William Maycock, Mayor—The Sheriffs fined—"Lilli-burlero" set on St. Michael's chimes—The Park arrangement—Jacobite prisoners—Political plotters in the Council House—The Mayor turns Jacobite—Dispute at the choice of Mayor—Rival candidates—Aldermanic disturbances in Church—The case decided at law—In favour of Alderman King—His triumphant entry and swearing in—Conclusion of the Irish War—Return of troops—Three years choice of Civic officers—Population and trades—Coventry ale—Queen Mary's death.

DURING the year 1689 the landing of James II. in Ireland, where the native races and Papists, supported by French aid, were prepared to uphold his rule, had caused King William to send Count Schomberg with an army over to that country. As Coventry lay on the road from London to Ireland, quantities of men, arms, guns, ammunition, money, and provisions passed through the City, and the billeting of troops became a hardship. In the spring, a regiment of foot under the Earl of Kingston, newly raised, was quartered in the Town, and many officers on their way to Ireland, including Schomberg, his son, and Count Somes, stayed at "the Star." After Londonderry had been successfully relieved, Colonel Walker, who had made so gallant a resistance there, on hastening to the Metropolis, had an ovation from the Coventry townsmen.

A new Parliament received summons to meet on 20th March, 1690. Sir Roger Cave withdrew. He died in 1703. At the contest Mr. Richard Hopkins, Mr. John Stratford, and Mr. Thomas Gery, presented themselves for election. Mr. Gery (or Geary) was the son of Alderman Gery, who had been expelled from the Council House in 1662 for refusing to take the Abjuration Oath, declaring the Solemn League and Covenant unlawful. He was a Tory, and supported by the Jacobites. Messrs. Hopkins and Stratford were Williamites and Whigs. Party colours now appeared, orange being the badge of the Williamites, in compliment to their Prince; whilst the Tories used "true blue," as supporting the Church and Constitution. Considerable

dissensions arose in the Council House, and all the candidates spent large sums of money. Mr. Gery's expenses were upwards of £500, and on the 11th of March

RICHARD HOPKINS, ESQ., AND JOHN STRATFORD, ESQ.,

were returned. The losing candidate complained that the return was unjust, and the Sheriffs partial at the election, and petitioned the House, but received small consideration for his trouble.

Throughout the country there were party dissensions. Jacobites intrigued, Papists plotted, and the Tories and High Churchmen were desirous of upsetting their opponents the Whigs. When the new Parliament met on the 20th March, 1690, the Tories outnumbered the latter.

Mr. Richard Hopkins was honoured with the presence of Prince George at his residence on the 4th of June, 1690. He stayed there for an evening, being received with "loud huzzas." King William came on the day following, when the Mayor, Aldermen, Citizens, and Companies, met him at New Gate, and escorted him through the City, from whence His Majesty proceeded to Sir Clement Fisher's, at Packington, where he stayed. Mr. Wanley, in his diary, adds: "Then came to His Majestie a messenger with letters from the Queen, who took his oath that he was but five hours and a half coming from London to Packington, but he was nearly killed by it!" The people of the County were anxious to see King William, and on the 3rd of August a report spread that His Majesty was again coming to Coventry, whereupon "great multitudes of people came from the adjacent towns, especially from Warwick; the City presenting the appearance of a great fair, and victuals were scarce, and not enough to suffice half the people." With anxious expectations they awaited His Majesty's coming from early morn to dewy eve, but as the King did not appear, at last "were fain to depart like fools, as they came." William won the Battle of the Boyne on the 1st July, but raised the siege of Limerick, and returned to England in September. The Coventry Council House, in order to commemorate his victories, promptly purchased portraits of King William, and Queen Mary, to hang in their Hall, and on the 22nd October there were great rejoicings, "bonfires and vollies of shott, etc., and it was so light with people of all sorts and conditions placing great candles in their windows, that in most streets in the Town one might see to pick up a pin."

On November 1st, 1690, Mr. William Maycock (clothier) was made Mayor, with Messrs. Luke Barnes (hatter) and Samuel Smith (mercier) Sheriffs. Mr. Maycock "was once a shepherd's boy, afterwards an hostler at the sign of the Castle, where he married his mistress's maid." The Sheriffs elected refused to serve, and on the 16th of December were fined, John Palmer and Jonas Crines being chosen instead.

At the abdication of King James, the political song, "Lilli-burlero," to which

tune "Wharton is said to have whistled King James out of the three kingdoms," was placed on the chime barrel in St. Michael's steeple, instead of the 113th Psalm, but was soon removed.

Mr. Anthony Townsend made arrangements by which the cattle of the inhabitants could be placed in the Park, upon payment of fourpence for a horse per week, and twopence for a cow.

In April, one hundred and fifty Jacobite officers, prisoners from Ireland, came in waggons to the City, and lay in the Gaol Hall for one night.

Political plotting raised great discord in the Council Chamber at Coventry. It existed chiefly between the Williamites and Jacobites, which culminated at the election of Civic officers in 1691. A design had been set on foot to lay aside Mr. Thomas Hopkins, a Williamite, and brother of the Member, from the Stewardship, in order to bring in Mr. Basil Feilding, of Coventry and Barnacle, a Tory and Jacobite, instead. It was "the custom to choose the officers for the City the Tuesday after Michaelmas, although the Mayor hath no power until All Saints' Day." His Worship, "having turned tail of the Williamites, joined the Jacobite party," and empannelled a Grand Inquest of thirty-one persons, in accordance with the City's Charter, "but when the election day came, certain of the Whigs and Dissenters insisted upon having a panel of their own, and to be the electors; alleging that the Charter required the Council House, and most ancient citizens that had served office, to be the thirty-one electors, whereas the Mayor and his friends said they had liberty and right to nominate so many, and not beyond the most ancient in line." Each party proceeded to the choice of officers. The Mayor, Churchmen, and Tories chose Mr. Thomas King (brewer) for Mayor; Mr. Basil Feilding, Steward; with Messrs. Thomas Walker, and Samuel Walker, Sheriffs, and swore the latter immediately. But the Whigs and Dissenters proposed Mr. Ralph Phillips (clothier) for Mayor; Mr. Thomas Hopkins, Steward; and Messrs. Samuel Billing and Vadamond Eyre as Sheriffs.

The day following, Sunday, there arose a disturbance in the Church between the Aldermen. Mr. Nathaniel Harriman, Chief Justice of the Quorum, with Aldermen Bradney, Daniel, Bott, etc., would place Mr. King above Mr. Phillips; but Mr. Francis Harriman, the other Justice of the Quorum, with Aldermen Owen, Lawrence, and Snell, would place Mr. Phillips next Mr. Maycock, the old Mayor. The former, calling to Mr. King, said, "Mr. Mayor elect, we keep your place here for you," but the other would not then accept it. The Whig minority petitioned the King's Council, and the case was to have been heard before them, but the Court, finding the matter would be best settled at law, left the Judges to decide it. Numerous persons were heard in London, and the case ended in a victory for Alderman King and his party. On coming to Coventry, their four coach loads of witnesses were met by a thousand men on foot, and three hundred on horses, who brought in the Alderman triumphantly. On

Thanksgiving day, November 26th, Mr. King was sworn in as Mayor, and the Mayoral feast was held on St. Thomas' day.

General Ginkell concluded the Irish War ; and the capitulation of Limerick, on the 3rd October, ended for that time, the trouble there. Major-General Mackay, with the Lord Chief Justice of Ireland, came to Coventry on Sunday, 8th November. He went to Church in the morning, and to Leather Hall in the evening. On the 16th the Prince of Hesse arrived on his way to London, and General Ginkell on the 11th December.

Richard Taylor (rope maker) was chosen Mayor in 1692, Edward Denham and John Michel (tailors) Sheriffs, and Allen Washington (mercier) and John Goodall (clothier), Chamberlains. In 1693, John Miller (dyer) was Mayor, Messrs. Smith (tanner) and Hollier (parchment maker) Sheriffs ; and in 1694, Catesby Oadham, who had been illegally turned out of the Council in James time, was chosen Mayor.

The population of Coventry in 1694 was but 6,710, but the introduction of new trades now gave it considerable impetus in commercial matters. The art of weaving striped and mixed tammies was introduced by Mr. Samuel Smith (mercier), whilst the manufacture of camblets, calimancoes, plushes, and such like articles being added, increased the trade, with considerable profit. Ribbon manufacture was introduced about 1712 ; gauzes and broadsilks followed. The worsted and silk weavers became separate Companies. Mr. Watson was a celebrated clockmaker of Coventry, and invented a most ingenious clock. The watch trade was introduced by Mr. G. Porter and others. Many of the old businesses survived, and were carried on, including the cappers, curriers, drapers, mercers, thread makers, clothiers, dyers, parchment makers, pewterers, shoe, felt, rope, and soap makers. The inns of the Town were numerous, and the traffic coming through the City, brought them considerable custom. Many were large and capacious, but became greatly improved when the roads were made better, about the end of the succeeding century. Mr. Alderman King, the wealthy Tory brewer, brought water from Radford, in 1675, for his own use, and also erected a new conduit. Mr. Edward Rawson was also a Coventry brewer, and "finding that he could not be sufficiently supplied with water from the works at Swanswell, erected new ones at a spring without Bishop Gate, which conducted the water by pipes, to his brewhouse in Cow Lane, plentifully supplying his own, and his neighbours, requirements." Although expenses caused him trouble, both he and Mr. King proved that good ale could be produced from the water at Coventry.

Queen Mary died on the 28th December, 1694.

CHAPTER XXIX.

MUNICIPAL CHANGES AND TROUBLES.

William III. (1694 to 1700).

Triennial Parliaments—A new one summoned—George Bohun, Esq., and Thomas Gery, Esq., chosen—Biography of the former—The Tory majority in the Council House—Disposal of public funds, etc.—Wrangles about Sir Thomas White's surplus—Dismissal of the Clerk and Bailiff—Their discoveries to the Corporations of Northampton, Nottingham, Warwick, and Leicester—Case heard and dismissed—Commencement of litigation—The Tories lose the majority in the Council House—How effected—Rival Mayors chosen—Case heard at Westminster—The Whigs triumphant—Results—A treaty with France—New Parliament summoned—Candidates: Sir Christopher Hales and Mr. Thomas Gery (Tories), Mr. Richard Hopkins and Mr. Thomas Hopkins (Whigs)—The contest—Sir Christopher Hales, Bart., and Mr. Richard Hopkins chosen—Biography of the former—Letter from Mr. Thomas Hopkins—Petitions of Mr. T. Gery and Mr. T. Hopkins—Parliamentary and Ministerial proceedings—Lord-Keeper Wright and the Great Seal—Parliament dissolved.

PARLIAMENT was dissolved on the 11th of October, 1695, and a new one summoned for the 22nd November following. Under the Triennial Act, Parliaments now became more frequent.

The Tories had a majority in the Council House at Coventry, and on the 19th November

GEORGE BOHUN, ESQ., AND THOMAS GERY, ESQ.,

were chosen Members.

Mr. George Bohun, of Coundon, was "the son of Mr. Abraham Bohun, of New House, Keresley" (who died in 1685), and Elizabeth, daughter of George Bathurst, Esq. The Bohun family claimed descent from the ancient Earls of Hereford, and the Coventry branch came from Bakewell, in Derbyshire, to Coundon, about the time of Queen Elizabeth, and were benefactors to the City. After his father's death, Mr. George Bohun resided at New House, and in 1695, finding the Church of St. Michael's, at Coventry, was but badly lighted for Evening Service, presented two massive figured brass chandeliers with his family arms engraved thereon, to the edifice, and caused them to be suspended by chains from the roof. This gift offended the Presbyterian Dissenters, who were envious, and started an untrue and disparaging story that they were first used at the funeral of a lunatic and suicide. New House, Keresley, was a spacious stone mansion, built by John Hales, Esq., about 1584, but sold by one of his

family in 1624. It was of good design and proportions, and from the saloon windows fine views of Coventry and the spires were obtainable. Mr. Bohun was the last male heir of his race, for his two sons died young, but his four daughters married into the various families of Clarke, Berkeley, Tomkins, and Lacy. He possessed considerable property both in Coventry, and in Warwickshire, and a considerable leasehold estate at Spitalfields, Middlesex. By will made in July, 1705, he divided his property amongst his daughters, and died 15th November, 1709, aged 65, being buried in the family vault in the Lady Chapel of St. Michael's Church. In 1720, considerable litigation took place amongst these families about the disposal of the property.

Alderman King's party still held sway in the Council House; they rigidly kept out all Whigs, Williamites, and Dissenters, and having the government of the Town, with its revenues, in their hands, became very obnoxious to their opponents. There were not only the rents and profits arising from the numerous loans, and other monies left by former benefactors, at the disposal of the Council House, but the right of placing their friends into office under the Corporation, the granting of publicans licenses by the Magistrates, and other matters of a similar character; they had the giving of the City fifties to young tradesmen, the disposal of Sir Thomas White's gifts, and the placing of their nominees in Bond's, Ford's, and the Bablake Boys' Hospitals, together with the letting of various lands and tenements on long leases, and the disposal of properties on easy terms to their friends, all of which were used even thus early for party purposes, whichever side held power.

But Tory as were the majority of the Members of the Council House, that authority had its wrangles, and in 1691 a difference arose about a surplus of Sir Thomas White's money, when Mr. T. Troughton, the Bailiff of the estate, and Mr. E. Owen, Clerk to the Council House, were dismissed from their offices. Aggrieved, they made discoveries to the Corporations of Northampton, Nottingham, Warwick, and Leicester; who were concerned in the charity; of the improved value of the estate, the irregular mode of leasing to one another at low rents, and the many large fines which the Council House had taken from time to time. These four Corporations were entitled to, and drew, certain monies from the funds of Sir Thomas White's estate occasionally, and in 1695 they filed an information in the Court of Chancery, to ascertain the amount of the surplus profit. It came before the Lord-Keeper Wright, assisted by Chief Justice Holt, and Judges Powell and Blencowe, in 1700, and was dismissed, but became the forerunner of further expensive litigation, extending over a considerable period.

Meanwhile, the Tories lost their influence in the Council Chamber. "The Mayor in 1695-6, Mr. Thomas Palmer, a Jacobite, had an action with Mr. Edmund Brownell about a portion of the Mermaid Inn, which he asserted belonged to Coleshill School, together with a small bay facing Broadgate. He was aided in the matter by the Tories and Jacobites in the Council House, who made an order to indemnify the Mayor in

CHAPTER XXX.

A HARD-FOUGHT CONTEST: THE SHERIFFS' COMMITTAL.

William III., continued (1701 to 1702).

Sir Christopher Hales and Mr. Thomas Hopkins chosen—Biography of the latter—His offices—"The Kit-Cat Club"—Death of James II.—The Pretender recognized by France—A loyal Coventry address—Parliament dissolved—Another summoned—Candidates: Sir Christopher Hales and Mr. Thomas Gery (Tories), Mr. Edward Hopkins and Mr. Henry Neale (Whigs)—The contest—Sheriffs return—Scrutiny—A double return made—Biographies of Mr. Edward Hopkins and Mr. Henry Neale—The latter's memorial—Allesley Manorial Courts—A tradition—Petitions of Sir C. Hales, several Coventry Freeman, and Mr. Henry Neale—Considered—Report thereon—The Members—Freemen's right to poll—Sir Christopher declared duly elected—The Sheriff and Under-Sheriff ordered into custody—Sir C. Hales name inserted, and that of Mr. Henry Neale erased—Parliamentary proceedings—King William's death.



AT Coventry, on the 7th January, 1701, a seat fell to either party, and

SIR CHRISTOPHER HALES, BART., AND THOMAS HOPKINS, ESQ., were returned Members. The Tories had a considerable majority in the Commons, and Mr. Harley was again chosen Speaker.

Mr. Thomas Hopkins was the second son of Sir Richard Hopkins. He, like others of his race, was "a money scrivener," and lending large and considerable sums to members of the needy Whig nobility, became not only extremely rich, but immediately connected with the chiefs of their party. Before King James abdication, he joined an association of the principal nobility and gentry, "who, with true zeal for their religion and country, opposed the arbitrary measures of that Monarch." Their meetings were conducive to forward the Revolution, and to promote the Prince of Orange's advent in England. Whilst their object was outwardly to promote literature and the various fine arts, the real end aimed at was the promotion of loyalty and allegiance to the Protestant succession in the House of Hanover. The Club took its name from one Christopher Kat, a Westminster confectioner, at whose house the Association met, to talk politics, and partake of the famous mutton pasties of their host, for, as "the Reformed Wife" has it, "a Kit-Cat is a supper for a Lord." The author of the Club memoirs is exceedingly severe upon Mr. Thomas Hopkins, and considered the Association gained nothing by the admission of the usurer, bluntly saying "he preferred wealth to intellect; and as he was abundantly supplied with the former, he was troubled with



E. Hopkins.

THE RT. HON. EDWARD HOPKINS.
Member for Coventry, 1701.
DIED, 1755.



Tho. Hopkins.

THOMAS HOPKINS, Esq.
Member for Coventry, 1701.
DIED, 1720



THE HOPKINS MONUMENT, SAINT MICHAEL'S CHURCH, COVENTRY.

a very insignificant proportion of the latter." His party appointed him a Commissioner of Salt Duties, he was Secretary to Lord Sunderland, and held, according to the above-quoted author, the office of "Gauger-General of Ireland."

James II. died at St. Germain's, in September, 1701, and the French King recognized his son, "the Pretender," James Edward, as King of England. English patriotism was thereby roused, and multitudes of loyal addresses were sent to King William, and amongst them a lengthy one signed by both Whigs and Tories of Coventry. The old Parliament was dissolved 11th November, and a new one called to meet on the 30th December, as supplies were required for the approaching war.

Messrs. Hales and Gery were again the Tory candidates, and Mr. Edward Hopkins and Mr. Henry Neale championed the cause of the Whigs. Great bitterness was displayed, and the contest was of an exciting nature. Bribery, corruption, and intimidation were openly and shamelessly carried on, "but the Whigs, having the monied interest in their favour, outbid their opponents." The majority of votes were recorded for Sir Christopher Hales and Mr. Edward Hopkins. Thus, as before, a seat should have fallen to either party, but on the 24th December, the Sheriffs made return that

MESSRS. EDWARD HOPKINS, AND HENRY NEALE,

were elected. In order, however, to satisfy the clamour raised in the City against their action, they granted a scrutiny, which, going against them, they abruptly closed, and sent up a second, or double, return of three candidates chosen.

Mr. Edward Hopkins was the son and heir of Mr. Richard Hopkins, late Member for Coventry, and Mary his wife; daughter of Alderman Johnson, and sister of Lady Hales. He was a nephew, and not a son, of Mr. Thomas Hopkins, as stated in the "Kit-Cat Memoirs," was born in 1673, practised as a lawyer, and like others of his family, became money lender and broker. Early adopting the principles of Whiggism, he became a prominent member of the "Kit-Cats," and Sir Godfrey Kneller painted his portrait, with that of his uncle Thomas, and most of the other members.

The Neales, of Allesley Park, had succeeded the Flynts in the possession of the Manor there. Mr. Henry Neale was the "second son and heir male of John Neale, of Deane, Bedfordshire," and "afterwards of Allesley;" by Anna, his wife, daughter and one of the co-heirs of Henry Cromwell, of Upwood, the brother of Robert Cromwell, the brewer of Huntingdon; to which lady, Oliver Cromwell, the Protector, her cousin, was guardian. Mrs. Anna Neale's sister, Elizabeth Cromwell, had married Oliver St. John, and thus Mr. Henry Neale was a nephew of the late Chief Justice. The monument in Allesley Church records further particulars of himself, his wife, and family:—

a very insignificant proportion of the latter." His party appointed him a Commissioner of Salt Duties, he was Secretary to Lord Sunderland, and held, according to the above-quoted author, the office of "Gauger-General of Ireland."

James II. died at St. Germain's, in September, 1701, and the French King recognized his son, "the Pretender," James Edward, as King of England. English patriotism was thereby roused, and multitudes of loyal addresses were sent to King William, and amongst them a lengthy one signed by both Whigs and Tories of Coventry. The old Parliament was dissolved 11th November, and a new one called to meet on the 30th December, as supplies were required for the approaching war.

Messrs. Hales and Gery were again the Tory candidates, and Mr. Edward Hopkins and Mr. Henry Neale championed the cause of the Whigs. Great bitterness was displayed, and the contest was of an exciting nature. Bribery, corruption, and intimidation were openly and shamelessly carried on, "but the Whigs, having the monied interest in their favour, outbid their opponents." The majority of votes were recorded for Sir Christopher Hales and Mr. Edward Hopkins. Thus, as before, a seat should have fallen to either party, but on the 24th December, the Sheriffs made return that

MESSRS. EDWARD HOPKINS, AND HENRY NEALE,

were elected. In order, however, to satisfy the clamour raised in the City against their action, they granted a scrutiny, which, going against them, they abruptly closed, and sent up a second, or double, return of three candidates chosen.

Mr. Edward Hopkins was the son and heir of Mr. Richard Hopkins, late Member for Coventry, and Mary his wife; daughter of Alderman Johnson, and sister of Lady Hales. He was a nephew, and not a son, of Mr. Thomas Hopkins, as stated in the "Kit-Cat Memoirs," was born in 1673, practised as a lawyer, and like others of his family, became money lender and broker. Early adopting the principles of Whiggism, he became a prominent member of the "Kit-Cats," and Sir Godfrey Kneller painted his portrait, with that of his uncle Thomas, and most of the other members.

The Neales, of Allesley Park, had succeeded the Flynts in the possession of the Manor there. Mr. Henry Neale was the "second son and heir male of John Neale, of Deane, Bedfordshire," and "afterwards of Allesley;" by Anna, his wife, daughter and one of the co-heirs of Henry Cromwell, of Upwood, the brother of Robert Cromwell, the brewer of Huntingdon; to which lady, Oliver Cromwell, the Protector, her cousin, was guardian. Mrs. Anna Neale's sister, Elizabeth Cromwell, had married Oliver St. John, and thus Mr. Henry Neale was a nephew of the late Chief Justice. The monument in Allesley Church records further particulars of himself, his wife, and family:—

"Near this place lyeth interred the body of Henry Neale, Esq., late Lord of the Manor and Patron of this Church, second son and heir male of John Neale, late of Deane, in ye County of Bedford, Esq., by Anna, his wife, daughter and one of the co-heirs of Henry Cromwell, late of Upwood, in the County of Essex, Esq., and also the body of Anna Maria, his wife, only daughter and heir of John Hanbury, of Feckenham, in the County of Worcester, Esq., with whom he lived as a tender and affectionate husband upwards of forty years, and survived but two months and twenty-five days.

She } died { 11th of Feby., 1730 } aged { 69.
He } { 6th of May, 1730 } { 70.

By her he left issue John, Joseph, Henry, Thomas, Hanbury, William, and Elizabeth, who in dutiful remembrance of their deceased parents have caused this monument to be erected.

As he was a tender and affectionate husband, he was likewise a kind and indulgent parent ; as a true friend, so a good neighbour ; as a constant promoter of virtue and discourager of vice, so likewise a zealous asserter of the Protestant religion and the liberty of his country."

Mr. Thomas Flynt had enfranchised part of his Allesley estate, and this led to disputes, in 1694, between Mr. Henry Neale and his tenantry. Mr. Awson, an eminent Coventry lawyer, in a MSS., "*Book of cases*," has left some interesting particulars of the ancient rights of the Manor of Allesley and its lords. Mr. Neale kept Court Leet and Court Baron at Michaelmas yearly, as his predecessors had done "*time out of mind*," and presided either himself or by his Steward. A "*Jury*" of Copyholders was empanelled, the Court's business transacted, and the various officers for the following year chosen. The "*Reeve*" received the rent roll of all chief and quit rents payable by Copyholders and Freeholders. He appointed a "*Biddle*," to serve the processes of the Court, and to collect all fines and amercements imposed by the "*Jury*." If a Copyholder refused this office he was liable to forfeit his copyhold.

Amongst the nobility and gentry of Warwickshire there was at this time a desire to build larger mansions for themselves, or to add considerable additions to their houses. Mr. Henry Neale, or his father, built the Hall, at Allesley, a large and spacious residence, situate in a picturesque situation, pleasantly overlooking both church and village, and placed the family arms—a lion rampant—over the principal *façade*. Tradition says that Mr. Neale was at this time desirous of making a new approach to his mansion, and borrowed a sum of money in order to plant an avenue of elm trees on the ridge of high land near the Hall, looking towards Coventry and its spires ; proposing to excavate the ground between the trees in order to improve the view, and make a drive from the old coach road to the entrance front of the residence. But when the trees had been planted, he was persuaded to stand as a candidate for the Coventry election, and spent the money on the contest instead. Afterwards, having (as will be seen) lost both his seat and money, the excavated road and direct approach were left undone, and never completed.

On January 3rd, 1702, Sir Christopher Hales petitioned the House, complaining of the Sheriffs conduct and returns. On the 7th, several Coventry Freemen petitioned on behalf of themselves and others to the same effect, and a third petition was presented from Mr. Henry Neale, making complaint of a double return. These petitions were

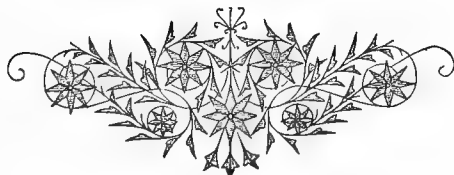
referred to a Committee ; and on the 24th February, the Chairman, Sir Rowland Gwyn, reported that at the poll, the voting was—

| | | | |
|------------------------------------|----|----|-------|
| " For Sir Christopher Hales, Bart. | .. | .. | 777 |
| " Mr. Edward Hopkins | .. | .. | 771 |
| " Mr. Henry Neale .. | .. | .. | 754 |
| " Mr. Thomas Gery .. | .. | .. | 615." |

" That the counsel for Sir Christopher Hales insisted that the right of election was in the Freemen not receiving alms [alms had been defined in 1690, by resolution of the House, as parish relief] or charity ; whilst the counsel for Mr. Henry Neale insisted on the right of election being in all the Freemen, whether they received alms or no," whereupon the Committee resolved " that the Freemen of Coventry receiving alms or charity had no right to vote at the election of Citizens to serve in Parliament for the said City of Coventry."

Both sides had agreed that no person could be a Freeman but by serving an apprenticeship of seven years, to one and the same trade within the City ; and the Committee, having heard the evidence of many persons, touching disqualifications, bribery, threats, rioting, and the like ; and having spent seven nights upon the inquiry, " Resolved, That Sir Christopher Hales, Bart., is duly elected," and " that Mr. Abraham Owen and Mr. John Collins, the Sheriffs of Coventry, are guilty of a false and double return, and of divers indirect practices at the late election for that City," and it was ordered " that they be taken into the custody of the Sergeant-at-Arms." The Committee having also further resolved " that Mr. Edward Owen, the Under-Sheriff, is guilty of illegal and partial proceedings," he also was ordered to be taken into custody in the same manner. On the 24th February, the House ordered the return to be amended, and the name of Sir Christopher Hales substituted for that of Henry Neale, Esq., erased.

The new Parliament again chose Mr. Harley as Speaker. The Pretender was attainted of high treason, and the Commons decided upon making no peace with France, until that country had made reparation for having acknowledged him. The Protestant succession was settled, and the country prepared for war, but King William died 6th March, 1702.



CHAPTER XXXI.

QUEEN ANNE'S PROCLAMATION FOR ARREST.

Anne (1702 to 1703).

Parliament continues sitting—Anne proclaimed Queen—Sheriffs J. Collins and A. Owen, and Under-Sheriff E. Owen, abscond—Abraham Owen in hiding at Coventry—The rival messengers—Reach Coventry nearly simultaneously—Sheriff A. Owen escapes to Holland—The Queen's proclamation for arrest—Fifty pounds reward for their apprehension—Copy of the Queen's proclamation—Thomas Colepeper mentioned—Why included—Sir Christopher Hales obtains damages and costs against the Sheriffs—His case for libel unsuccessful—The Queen's coronation—A change at Court—The Tories in power—Parliament dissolved and new one called—Contest at Coventry—Candidates: Messrs. Edward Hopkins and Henry Neale (Whigs), Sir Christopher Hales and Thomas Gery (Tories)—The latter chosen—Threatened petition.

BY virtue of an Act passed during the late King's reign, Parliament continued sitting after his death. It declared the Princess Anne, second daughter of the late King James II., to be Queen, and issued orders for proclaiming her.

Meanwhile, Messrs. John Collins and Abraham Owen, the Coventry Sheriffs, together with Mr. Edward Owen, the Under-Sheriff, feeling that their actions at the late election, if exposed, would place their liberty in peril, and subject them to imprisonment and ignominy, quitted London speedily; refusing to surrender to the Sergeant-at-arms, and absconded. Two of them hastened to the Continent, but Mr. Abraham Owen came to Coventry, and stayed some days in hiding in his own house, or in that of his friend, Mr. Snell. When the writs were issued to apprehend the Sheriffs, Mr. Owen's London friends were on the alert, and immediately sent a mounted messenger to Coventry to warn him of his danger, and meanwhile another from the Crown, with equal expediency, proceeded in haste to the City to effect his apprehension. The two couriers arrived in Coventry so near together "that the friendly messenger turned the corner of Much Park Street when the Queen's was in sight of Dead Lane corner, there being scarcely half a mile between." Mr. Sheriff Owen was quickly informed, and gaining his friend's abode managed to hide for a time, but at length found means to escape to Holland. Finding the Sheriffs flown, the Queen, by advice of her Council, issued a proclamation upon the 5th of April for their arrest, offering a reward of £50 to anyone for the discovery, apprehension, and bringing to justice of any or either of the culprits; which read as follows:—

“BY THE QUEEN.



A PROCLAMATION
FOR APPREHENDING
THOMAS COLEPEPER, ABRAHAM OWEN,
AND JOHN COLLINS, ESQUIRES,
AND
EDWARD OWEN, GENTLEMAN.

ANNE R.

WHEREAS the Knights, Citizens, and Burgesses of the House of Commons in Parliament assembled, have humbly represented unto us that Thomas Colepeper, Esq., and Abraham Owen, Esq., have been guilty of many scandalous and indirect practices, and in contempt of the justice of that House, absconded; and that John Collins, the other Sheriff for the City of Coventry, having been guilty of a false and double return for the said City of Coventry, and divers indirect practices, in contempt of the judgment of that House, hath absconded; and that Edward Owen, Under-Sheriff of the City of Coventry, having been guilty of divers illegal and partial proceedings in the late election for the City of Coventry, in contempt of the justice of that House, hath absconded; and have therefore humbly besought us to issue forth our Royal Proclamation for apprehending the said Thomas Colepeper, Abraham Owen, John Collins, and Edward Owen, in order to their being prosecuted for their several offences. We therefore, with the advice of our Privy Council, have thought fit to issue this our Royal Proclamation, and do hereby straightway charge and command all our loving subjects to discover, take, and apprehend the said Thomas Colepeper, Abraham Owen, John Collins, and Edward Owen, and every of them, wherever they shall be found, and to carry them, or such of them as they shall discover, take, and apprehend, respectively, before the next Justice of the Peace, or Chief Magistrate, where they, or any of them, be so taken and apprehended; who is hereby required to take sufficient security for their respective appearances in our Court of Queen's Bench at Westminster, to answer to us for such misdemeanours, and in default of finding security, to commit them to the Common Gaol of such County where they respectively shall be taken, there to remain until he, or they, shall be thence delivered by due course of law. And we do hereby require such Justice, or other Chief Magistrate, immediately to give notice thereof to our Privy Council, or to one of our Principal Secretaries of State. And we do hereby strictly charge and command all our loving subjects (as they will answer the contrary at their perils) that they do not in any ways conceal the said Thomas Colepeper, Abraham Owen, John Collins, and Edward Owen, or any, or either of them, but that they do discover, take, and apprehend them, and every of them, to the end according to law. And we do hereby promise and declare that whosoever shall discover and apprehend the said Thomas Colepeper, Abraham Owen, John Collins, and Edward Owen, or any, or either of them, and shall bring them, or such of them as shall be so taken and apprehended during this season of Parliament, before such Justice of the Peace, or Chief Magistrate, the sum of *Fifty Pounds*, which the Commissioners of our Treasury are hereby directed to pay accordingly. Given at our Court at St. James's, the *Fifth Day of April, 1702*, In the First Year of our Reign.

GOD SAVE THE QUEEN."

Thomas Colepeper, mentioned in the proclamation, had more to do with the Maidstone petition case than that of Coventry. Having been a candidate at the late election for that Borough, and unsuccessful, he petitioned against the return of his opponent, Mr. Blisse; but the same Committee that heard the Coventry case, not only declared Mr. Blisse elected, but that Mr. Colepeper had himself been guilty of

indirect practices. Having been instrumental in presenting "The Kentish Petition" to the House, and of printing a libel entitled, "A Letter to the Freeholders and Freemen of England," wherein some Members of the last House were accused of taking French money, and acting in the service of France, the House taking notice of "the said scandalous, villainous, and groundless reflection," ordered Mr. Colepeper's committal to Newgate, and instructed the Attorney-General to prosecute him.

How the affair ended, so far as Parliament is concerned, is by no means clear—possibly the Coventry Sheriffs surrendered; but Sir Christopher Hales was not satisfied with obtaining his seat in Parliament, and brought an action against them, in which he obtained a verdict of £600 damages, and costs nearly £200. He also had a further case with Alderman Owen, for printing an alleged libel in a pamphlet called "The Black Book," which was heard at Warwick and adjourned from four consecutive assizes, but in the end Mr. Owen was acquitted.

Queen Anne's accession was popular with all parties, and even the Jacobites seemed pleased. She confirmed William's engagements with the allies, was crowned on the 23rd of April, and war was proclaimed with France and Spain. As Princess of Denmark she had been ill-used by the Whigs, a complete change was now made at Court, and the Tories came into power. The Queen dissolved Parliament on the 2nd July, 1702, and ordered a new one to assemble on the 20th August following.

There was great contention at the elections, but as the Court favoured the Tories, that party prevailed, and had a considerable majority when the Parliament met. The same candidates as at the last election came forward at Coventry—Messrs. Edward Hopkins and Henry Neale for the Whigs, with Sir Christopher Hales and Mr. Thomas Gery for the Tories. The contest was severe, and on the 22nd July

SIR CHRISTOPHER HALES, BART., AND MR. THOMAS GERY,

were chosen. There had been some bribery on both sides, but the weaker party stood little chance against their opponents, and Court interests. Petitions were threatened, but the large majority of the Government acted as a deterrent, and the action of the Tory Party in questioning the election of various weak members, with great partiality, left Messrs. Hopkins and Neale little hope of success if they had done so.



CHAPTER XXXII.

A RIOTOUS AND A PEACEABLE ELECTION.

Anne, continued (1704 to 1707).

Occasional Conformity—Letter of Sir Christopher Hales to Mayor—A new Parliament summoned—Candidates: Sir C. Hales and Mr. T. Gery (Tories), Mr. E. Hopkins and Sir O. Bridgeman (Whigs)—Contest—Queen's letter—Mob law—Messrs. Hales and Gery returned—Mutual recriminations—Settled at the Assizes—A Whig account of the election—The Low Party triumphant in the Commons—Petitions—The case considered—Hales and Gery unseated—The election void—Decision—A new contest—Same candidates—A "peaceable election"—Polling by scores—The return—Sir O. Bridgeman and Mr. Edward Hopkins returned—Tory petitions, left unconsidered—Account of Sir O. Bridgeman—Thomas, Earl of Coventry, chosen Recorder—Order of Privy Council—Death of Mr. Richard Hopkins—Union of English and Scotch Parliaments—First Parliament of Great Britain.



PARLIAMENT continued sitting, but there were great dissensions between the Houses upon the Bill for preventing Occasional Conformity, and other matters. Sir Christopher Hales wrote the following letter to Mr. M. Goodhall, the Mayor, in the expectation of a speedy dissolution:—

"London, Feby. ye 24th, 1704.

"Mr. Mayor,—Since this recent Parliament is near a conclusion, I cannot but acquaint you with my design of standing for Member for the City of Coventry, and since my ancestors have been benefactors to the Town, and without vanity I may say I have served the City not only in the House of Commons with fidelity, but in the House of Lords in their late tryal for Sir Tho. White's estate with the utmost diligence and sincerity, I doubt not of your interest, and that of your brethren, to whom I desire you to communicate this from

Your faithful servant,

"My respects to your good family."

"CHR. HALES."

The Queen dissolved Parliament on the 6th of April, 1705, and called a new one for the 14th of June. Sir Christopher Hales and Mr. Thomas Gery again came forward in the Tory interest, whilst Mr. Edward Hopkins and Sir Orlando Bridgeman championed the cause of the Whigs. Great contention arose, the Tories raising the cry of "The Church in danger." The Corporation now appear to have thrown over Sir Christopher. The reading of a letter at the poll, from the Queen, for the prevention

of tumults, offended the Tory gentry and leaders, and led to rioting. "The mob beat the Magistrates, wounded the Mayor (S. Billing), disarmed the watchmen, and took away their halberts," and "proceeding most violently," made an election of

MESSRS. HALES AND GERY.

They were returned as elected 24th of May, and chaired amidst considerable excitement. The Tories indicted the Mayor, with certain of the Magistrates and citizens, for riot, and the Whigs following suit, charged fifty of their opponents, also. When Baron Price heard the cases at the ensuing summer assizes; he expressed his opinion that "the Magistrates could not have greater honour than to justify all their proceedings," and directed the Jury, "that if they found them guilty they must overthrow the government of the City," whereupon the Mayor and his party were acquitted. The other side fared worse, for several were found guilty; some of the poorer sort confessed to the indictment, but placing themselves upon the Court's mercy, received small sentences. "A Review of the State of the English," written on behalf of the Whigs, August 17th, 1706, has the following:—

"Of all the men of England who have run out of their common understanding, I defie the Nation to match our Bretheren of the High Church at Coventry. Here's a comedy:—

MOB *A LA MODE*; OR, THE COVENTRY ELECTION.

Walk in, gentlemen, and take your places. Here's the rabble uppermost and the Magistrates under their feet. Here's Hales and Gery in masquerade. Observe the dialogue. Enter Mr. Gery, with servants, townsmen, etc., and his Worship making a fine speech.

SCENE—THE MARKET CROSS.

Enter Gery, Gentlemen of Coventry, Mob, Hales and Gery.

GERY.—Here's the Mayor and his brethren pretend to peace, and have read a long paper, which they call the Queen's letter, commanding them to disarm you; and that you shall not come with staves to the election! But I say you shall come to the election! And I expect you, and pray bring your sticks with you! I'll bear you out of it; the Queen is not to choose Parliament men!

MOB.—Hooray! Hooray!!

GERY.—And if anyone come with halberts, *take them away* from them, gentlemen, and break them!—Exit MOB, 'Hooraying.'

Meanwhile the Whigs had obtained a triumphant majority in the Commons, and at the outset, Mr. William Bromley, of Baginton, who was supported by the Tories for the Speakership, was outvoted by 43 votes. The Coventry Whigs, seeing hopes of success if a petition against Messrs. Hales and Gery was sent to the House, presented one on the 13th November, 1705, from several Freemen of the City, complaining of an undue return; and again, on the 4th December, 1706, another petition from Coventry was read, complaining of great riots, etc., when, after much debate, and many witnesses had been heard, the Committee resolved that Sir Christopher Hales and Thomas Gery, Esq., were not duly elected, and that the late election was void. They further resolved, "That it appears to the House that there has been a notorious riot and tumult, and other illegal practices, at the election of Citizens to serve in this present

Parliament for that City, in contempt of the Civil Authority, and violation of the freedom of elections."

The same candidates came again before the Freemen. The poll was taken at the Gaol Hall by scores, and the contest became known as "The peaceable election." The final numbers being :—

| | | | |
|------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| Sir O. Bridgeman | ... | ... | 693 |
| Edward Hopkins | ... | ... | 673 |
| Sir C. Hales | ... | ... | 618 |
| Thomas Gery | ... | ... | 573 |

And on the 25th February, 1707, the City returned

SIR O. BRIDGEMAN, AND EDWARD HOPKINS, ESQ.

The Tories accused their adversaries of illegal proceedings, and lodged a petition on the 23rd April, 1707, from some of their Freemen, complaining of the unjust return of Messrs. Bridgeman and Hopkins, which appears to have been left unconsidered by the Whig House of Commons.

Sir Orlando Bridgeman, Bart., of Coventry and Ridley, was descended by a younger branch of the family from Sir Orlando Bridgeman, Bart., Chief Justice of Common Pleas, and Lord-Keeper of the Privy Seal to Charles II. The Bridgemans had a residence at an ancient half-timbered house of goodly proportions in Little Park, Coventry. The family had purchased Ridley about 1650, when the Edgertons dissipated their estates by gambling. There is no monument to the Bridgemans in the Church at Bunbury, in which parish the township of Ridley is situate, and the ancient house at Coventry was pulled down some eighty years ago, but a monument in St. Michael's Church, Coventry, records that a Sir Orlando Bridgeman died 20th April, 1701, aged 51, and his wife Mary on 8th June, 1701, in the 50th year of her age, and they were buried there. The Rev. Mr. Fox, who preached the funeral sermon of Lady Mary, printed and dedicated it to her son, who "represented Coventry in the fourth, seventh, and twelfth Parliaments of Queen Anne." He was found drowned in the Thames in May, 1738.

Thomas, second Earl of Coventry, was chosen Recorder of Coventry in 1706. His Lordship married Lady Anne Somerset, daughter of Henry, Duke of Beaufort. He was allied by marriage with the Craven family, and died in August, 1710.

The Privy Council ordered the Oaths to be tendered to disaffected or suspected persons in Coventry on the 24th March, 1707. During the year Mr. Richard Hopkins, ex-M.P., died. The Union between the English and Scotch Parliaments took place, pressed on by the Whigs and opposed by the Tories. Forty-five Scotch representatives were admitted to the Commons, and the Assembly became the first Parliament of Great Britain.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

CORPORATION LOSSES AND TORY VICTORIES.

Anne, continued (1708-1714).

An election—Candidates: Sir O. Bridgeman and Mr. E. Hopkins (Whigs), Sir C. Hales and Hon. Robert Craven (Tories)—The former returned—Mr. Craven's petition heard—Sitting Members declared duly elected—The right of voting decided—Difficulty at choice of Mayor—Charles Spencer, Earl of Sunderland, chosen Recorder—Account of him—Formation of a Tory Cabinet—A new Parliament called—The retirement from Coventry, and further biography of Edward Hopkins, Esq.—Election at Coventry—The Honourable Robert Craven and Thomas Gery chosen—Songs of the time—The "Restoration"—The Tory House of Commons choose Right Hon. William Bromley Speaker—Death of Hon. Robert Craven—Mr. Cloberry Bromley chosen instead—Account of him—Petition against Mr. Gery's return—The Fullers petition decided—Death of Cloberry Bromley—Sir Christopher Hales chosen—Litigation about White's and Bablake trust—The Lord Chancellor's order—Sequestration granted—Corporation removed, and new trustees appointed—Novel election of Chief Magistrate—Attempts to seize the sword and mace—Peace with France—A new Parliament—Candidates: Sir Fulwar Skipwith and Sir Christopher Hales (Tories), Mr. John Neale (Whig)—A rough political punishment—Messrs. Hales and Skipwith returned—Account of the latter—Petition against their return—Occasional Conformity and the Council Chamber—Death of Queen Anne.

THE old Parliament was dissolved 1st April, 1708, and a new one called to assemble on the 8th July following. Many of the election contests in May were hard fought. Sir O. Bridgeman and Mr. E. Hopkins again stood for the Whigs at Coventry, and Sir C. Hales, with Mr. Robert Craven, a brother of Lord Craven, for the Tories. These latter made a stout poll, but were defeated, and although they called for a scrutiny, the position remained unaltered.

SIR ORLANDO BRIDGEMAN, BART., AND EDWARD HOPKINS, ESQ., again became Members. Mr. Craven petitioned against the return, but the Whigs being in the ascendancy, on 1st March, 1709, the petition was dismissed, and the sitting Members declared duly elected. It was at this time resolved in the House that "the right of election" at Coventry was "in such persons as had served apprenticeships for seven years within the City, to one and the same trade, not receiving alms or constant charities." On the question whether "persons receiving Sir Thomas White's gift are thereby disqualified from giving their votes, it passed in the negative," and further, that "persons receiving Mr. Wheatley's gift" are "not disqualified."

The Council House, expecting to lose Sir Thomas White's Charity—about which,

since 1692, they had been at law—found great difficulty in choosing a Mayor. They were unable to allow the usual £50 towards the expenses of the office, and none of the Low Churchmen or Whigs would serve; upon which they elected Mr. W. Bird for the second time, but he refused; and on the 30th October Alderman Diston was prevailed upon to take office, and he held no feast during the year.

In 1710, Charles Spencer, third Earl of Sunderland, the Whig Secretary of State, was chosen to the Recordership of Coventry. "Lord Spencer," says Coxe, "in person was highly favoured by nature, and no less gifted with intellectual powers. In him a bold and impetuous spirit was concealed under a cold, reserved exterior." His first wife was Lady Arabella Cavendish, daughter of Henry, Duke of Newcastle. She died in 1698, soon after which he married Lady Anne Churchill, third daughter of John, Duke of Marlborough. Queen Anne, owing to Marlborough's entreaties, made him Secretary of State in 1706. In the year of his being chosen Recorder of Coventry, he advised the impeachment of Dr. Sacheverel, and was with the Whigs dismissed from office.

Her Majesty had for some time desired a Tory Government, and found the people tired of the Whig administration. After her quarrel with Lady Marlborough, a Tory Cabinet was formed, and the Whig interest lost power at Court. This was followed by the Queen's dismissal of Parliament 21st September, 1710, and the calling of a new one for the 25th November following.

Mr. Edward Hopkins now disappears from political life in Coventry. The expensive contests, the loss of the Charities by the Corporation, and the death of his father, all led to the separation. He sat in the Irish Parliament of 1705-27 for Dublin University, and in the following British Parliaments, for Eye, in Suffolk:—1713, 1714-15 (re-elected after appointment to an office of profit under the Crown, 28th June, 1716), and 1721-2 (re-elected 3rd November, 1722, after accepting another Crown Office appointment), sitting until 1727. He became a Privy Councillor, and his monument in St. Michael's, Coventry, records him to be

"A person eminently distinguished for parts, politeness, and all other amiable qualities, who, after having discharged with honour the offices, first of one of the Commissioners of the Treasury, then Secretary for Ireland, and Master of the Revels there, and having represented the City of Coventry and the Borough of Eye in the Parliament of Great Britain, for the space of two and twenty years. Pursuing the same interest as his father."

Whigs and Dissenters became unpopular at Coventry, they lost ground, and no record has been found of a contest. The cry of the Tories was, "The Church and Dr. Sacheverel," and on the 17th of October their nominees,

ROBERT CRAVEN, ESQ., AND THOMAS GERV, ESQ.,

were chosen. They were both High Churchmen, and would have favoured the Pretender if he had changed his religion. Two songs of this election remain. One, "an excellent New song to the memorable tune of Lilli-burlero," written in praise of Marlborough and his friends, has no local allusion whatever. The other was—

"THE RESTAURATION,
OR THE
COVENTRY SONG OF 1710.



*The Restauration now's the Word, a Blessed Revolution !
That has secured the Church, the Crown, and England's Constitution ;
May ev'ry Loyal Soul Rejoice, may Whigs and Canters mourn, Sir,
Who ever thought that Coventry would make a due return, Sir.*

*We Rally'd the Church Militant, and fell to work Ding Dong, Sir,
Craven and Gery are the names that do adorn Our Song, Sir ;
Beaufort, Ormonde, Rochester, and more than we can tell, Sir,
Are Themes that well deserve the praise of Brave Sacheverel, Sir.*

*The Glorious Sons of Warwickshire may justly be commended,
There's ne'er a Member now Elect that ever has offended ;
Denbigh and Craven we esteem, a Loyal and Noble Pair, Sir,
And Hope to see our Worthy Friend, Great Bromley, in the Chair, Sir.*

FINIS: 1710."

There were a great many Tories in the new Parliament, the Marlborough influence ended for a time, and the Commons House chose the Right Hon. William Bromley, of Baginton, and Member for Oxford University, as Speaker; and he appointed the Rev. Mr. Kimberley, Vicar of Holy Trinity, in Coventry, for his Chaplain.

Mr. Robert Craven did not long enjoy the honour of representing Coventry, for he died in December, 1710, and on the 25th of that month

MR. CLOBERY BROMLEY

was chosen to succeed him. He was the eldest son of Mr. Speaker Bromley, and, like his father, his views were High Church and Tory, with a leaning towards Jacobitism.

Meanwhile, Mr. Gery's return was petitioned against in Parliament, with little effect. The Coventry Fullers Company also sent up a petition, declaring that they had always enjoyed the privileges of Freemen up to October 17th, 1710, when, in consequence of the resolution of 1709, the Sheriffs had refused their votes. They and their predecessors were compelled to live without the City for the benefit of their fulling mills, but paid to Church and poor, and served all offices belonging to the City

Companies. They prayed the House to ascertain their right. Evidence as to usage was heard, when the Committee resolved, and the House agreed, "That the members of the Company of Fullers, being Freemen, and all such Freemen as do not receive alms or weekly charity, and have served seven years apprenticeship within the said City or suburbs, have a right to vote."

In April, 1711, Mr. Clobery Bromley died. His seat was filled on the 24th, by the return of

SIR CHRISTOPHER HALES, BART.

Litigation had been going on for some years in consequence of the discovery of the bad administration of Sir Thomas White's estate by the Corporation. Being found defaulters, the Lord Chancellor ordered that they should make good the sum of £2,241 1s. 3d., which they were unable to do at the time, for their expenses in law suits about this Charity were considerable. The Lord Chancellor further decreed, and granted "a sequestration to Mr. Thomas Wright and other Commissioners, in May, 1712, whereby they seized St. Mary's Hall, and all other properties of the Corporation, including the sword and mace, and discharged the tenants of the Council House from paying rents or payments to the Corporation." The sequestration remained in force for seven years. In May, 1711-12, the Court ordered that the Hon. William Bromley, Hon. John Craven, Sir Thomas Gery, and certain other persons, should be Trustees for the management of the Charity, and have the estates conveyed to them in trust, with such full powers as the Corporation itself held. The said Thomas Wright and other Commissioners, in 1712, further filed an information in Chancery against the Corporation, and one John Collins, relative to a reputed fraud made by the sale of timber in 1703, at a very low price, the property of Bond's, on Bablake, estate. The Corporation had sold the timber below its value, and the purchaser, Collins, gave them security for payment of the amount; but in 1707 they had given him the bond back, and cancelled it on account of his past services, without having first received the money. The Court, finding the estate badly managed, directed the Corporation to convey it to new Trustees, half to be appointed by the relators, and half by the Corporation, and ordered Mr. Collins to make good the deficiency. By the loss, for the time, of the direct interest they had by the Charities, the Corporation lost considerable power over the needy Freemen of the City at election times.

During this time considerable party feelings were shown in the Town. In 1710, Mr. Abraham Owen had been appointed Mayor, and on the 1st November, 1711, the gentlemen of the Tory party privately assembled several countrymen at a public-house near St. Mary's Hall, with the intention of seizing and carrying off the sword and mace from the Mayor's party, when the Mayor-elect, Mr. Joseph Eburne, should come to be sworn at the Hall; but the members of the Whig Council House frustrated their design by quietly removing the emblems of civic power to a house in Fleet Street, opposite

the "Eagle and Child," and there awaited the coming of Mr. Eburne. On his arrival they came out with the sword and mace, and, forming a Court, proceeded to swear in the new Mayor; the old and new Chief Magistrates kneeling on cushions in the open street. The proceedings quickly terminated on the mob hearing of the affair, and the new Mayor was hastily escorted home. During the year several attempts were made to seize the civic regalia, and for a time it was secretly taken away in a basket of wool to the village of Canley, some two miles from the City. In 1712, Alderman A. Owen at the last moment was prevailed upon again to accept office.

Peace was signed with France on the 11th April, 1713, amidst considerable rejoicing. Parliament having dissolved on the 8th August, and a new one being summoned on the 12th of November; Sir Christopher Hales, with Sir Fulwar Skipwith, came forward for the Tories; and Mr. John Neale, of Allesley Park, for the Whigs. There was great disturbance. Only nine of Mr. Neale's friends were polled, and several of them were violently assaulted, and placed astride a large wooden horse with a sharp back, in front of the Gaol, whilst the poll was taking place within. The election closed on the 1st of September, when

SIR C. HALES, BART., AND SIR F. SKIPWITH, BART.,

were declared duly elected.

Sir Fulwar Skipwith, Bart., of Newbold Hall, held considerable estates in Warwickshire, and Miss Elizabeth Skipwith, daughter of his son, Humberston Skipwith, Esq., had married William, second Lord Craven, who died in 1711.

A petition from several hundred of Coventry Freemen was soon presented, complaining of an undue return of the sitting Members, "by indirect practices of the Candidates and their agents, and likewise by great riots," but no reports of any enquiry are to be found.

The Bill for preventing Occasional Conformity was at length passed by the connivance of the Whigs in 1712, and a fine of £40 fixed. During 1713 many persons in the Council House at Coventry left their places, including Aldermen Cater, Diston, Collins, Hasard, Hunt, Brockhurst, Olds, Lucas, Keeling, Kennon, J. Collins, Gravenor, Clements, Lander, Fox, and J. Poole, but quickly returned. The Bill remained in force until 1719, when General Stanhope introduced "a Bill for strengthening the Protestant interest," by which the Occasional Conformity Act, and Schism Act, were abolished, but the Test Act remained.

Queen Anne died on 1st August, 1714, and having no children surviving her, George, Elector of Hanover, was proclaimed King.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

WHIG SUCCESSES, AND CORPORATION GAINS.

George I. (1714 to 1721).

The Tories removed from power—Parliament dissolved—A contest—Candidates: Messrs. Hales and Skipwith (Tories), and Messrs. Samwell and Oughton (Whigs)—The Court and the Corporation—The Magistrates and the licenses—Party houses—"Toby's Coffee House"—Poll taken in Cross Cheaping—Action of the Magistrates—The Sheriffs partiality—Their adjournment to the Star, and refusal to poll—The bellman sent round at night—But Freemen driven away—The numbers on the books—Sir T. Samwell and Colonel A. Oughton returned—Whig boasting—Tory declaration as to the polling—Their petition unheard—Biographies of Sir Thomas Samwell and Colonel Adolphus Oughton—Death of Sir Christopher Hales—Sale of his estates—Passing the Septennial Bill—Sunderland and Addison, Secretaries of State—South Sea Bubble—Sunderland's removal and death—Charles Fitz-Roy, Duke of Grafton, chosen Recorder—Account of him—Sir Thomas White's Trust regained by the Coventry Council House.

KING GEORGE promptly stripped the Tories of their offices, and placed his Whig friends in power. Bromley was removed from the Secretaryship, and Sunderland made Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland. As the Whig Ministry could not go along whilst the Tories had a majority in the Commons, the King dissolved Parliament on the 5th January, 1715, and called a new one for the 15th of March following. The elections were influenced by the Court. Messrs. Hales and Skipwith again came forward in the High interest at Coventry, and the Recorder found two of his friends, Sir Thomas Samwell and Colonel Adolphus Oughton, to oppose them. Meanwhile the Court, by offers of service to the Corporation, secured their interest, and that body used every endeavour to turn out the old Members. Divested, however, of much influence in the City by the loss of White's and Bablake Trusts, the Magistrates took various arbitrary measures, amongst which the taking away, or withholding, of licenses from such publicans as voted contrary to their wishes, were conspicuous. The different houses often changed hands, and sides, but the parties had their inns, and taverns, to meet at, and consider local and national matters with the well-informed innkeepers. The chief houses of the Whigs, were the Star, and the King's Head, where Marlborough's exploits and the foreign military position formed topics of conversation, and from the latter of which the Jacobites surreptitiously removed King William's portrait. At the White Bear, and the Bull, the Tories congregated

former, whose cards are exposed, has a good hand, whilst the redoubtable Cæsar, from behind the latter, is ready to indicate to his master what to play. Amongst an excellent collection of paintings at Duston House, are many connected with the Samwell family, and amongst them, those of Sir Thomas Samwell, John Neale, Esq., and Sir Adolphus Oughton, all of whom were Members for Coventry. Sir Thomas married twice, first Millicent, daughter of Dr. Thomas Fuller, of Hatfield (the Church historian), in 1709. This lady died in 1716; and four years after, he married Mary, daughter of Gilbert Clarke, Esq., of Chilcote, Derbyshire, who died at Upton in 1758. His children by the first wife were Sir Thomas Samwell (third Baronet), Richard, Millicent, Frances, and Mary; by his second wife, Sir Wenman Samwell (fourth and last Baronet), Catherine, and Dorothy. His memorial in Upton Church adds the following:—

"In the year 1745, when a vile crew of lawless wretches, headed by the eldest son of the Pretender to the Crown of these realms, scattered the flames of rebellion into the very heart of this country, he and his two sons, Thomas and Wenman, accepted commissions in one of the principal regiments, raised and commanded by the Right Hon. George Dunk, Earl of Halifax. He was zealous in the cause of liberty, uniform in his politics, steady in the principles of the Church of England, as by law established. He courted not the great. He sought not after honour. On the one there was small dependence, in the other no real felicity. Truly sensible of the falsehood, ingratitude, and corruption of mankind, he preferred retirement to the glare and splendour of a Court, and looked upon '*a private station*' as the true post of honour. He died the sixteenth day of November, in the year of our Lord 1757, aged 70."

Adolphus Oughton, who was created a Baronet, and K.B., shortly after the election, was a Colonel in the 2nd Regiment of Dragoons. His ancestors had settled at Fillongley, near Coventry, shortly after the Restoration. He was the son of Adolphus Oughton, Esq., and Mary, daughter of Mr. Richard Samwell; and sister of Sir Thomas Samwell, first Baronet. He was born in 1684 (in which year his father died), and baptized at Fillongley. Sir Adolphus married his cousin Frances, widow of Sir Edward Bagot, Bart., she was the daughter of Frances Samwell (sister of Mary, the wife of Adolphus Oughton, Esq.), who married Sir Thomas Wagstaffe, Knt., of Tachbrook, near Leamington. He came to live at the Manor House of Tachbrook, and in December, 1735, was promoted to the rank of Brigadier General in the Army. The Vicar of Layland, in his poem upon Coventry, says of Sir Adolphus—

"Ladies, I praise you, but I fear Sir 'Dolphus—
He's great at Court, and intimate with Malpas;
I'd venture—but he'll leave me in the lurch—
To win your favour, but I love a Church;
Take fire yourselves, and be as warm as embers,
And next election mortify your Members."

He presented a portrait of George I. to Coventry, and dying in 1736, his body was buried in Bishop's Tachbrook Church on the 9th September, but no monument remains. His son, General Oughton, was educated under Dr. Jackson at the Coventry Free School.

The late Member, Sir Christopher Hales, died 3rd February, 1716, aged 40. He was buried in St. Michael's Church, Coventry. In early life he had been forced to

mortgage the Whitmore Park estate to Lord Guildford, to pay off his brother's and sister's fortunes, and in order to retain his seat for Coventry, impoverished his property greatly. In 1715 he sold the Willenhall estate. Dying unmarried, his remaining possessions came to Sir Edward Hales, third Baronet, but the debts were so large, that an Act of Parliament was obtained for the sale of the Coventry property ; including the White Friars and Whitmore estates ; to John, Duke of Montague, to pay them off. Sir Edward removed to Lincoln, and the connection of the family with Coventry ceased.

The Septennial Bill was passed by this Parliament in order chiefly to prolong its own existence. The alteration from three to seven years suited the Court, and, it was said, would save expense to Members, continual contests, and give security to the Government recovering from the Jacobite rebellion. In 1717, Sunderland obtained Townsend's removal from the Ministry, and he, with Joseph Addison, of Bilton, Warwickshire, became Secretaries of State. Soon after Sunderland became Foreign Minister, and was subsequently removed to the Treasury.

In 1721 the South Sea Bubble burst. The Minister Sunderland, being involved, was soon after driven from power. He retired, and his death occurred on the 19th of April, 1722. Walpole was in the ascendant, and in May, the Whig Corporation of Coventry chose Charles Fitz-Roy, second Duke of Grafton, to the vacancy, whereupon Mr. T. Hopkins was instructed to acquaint him thereof. The new Recorder was the son of Henry Fitz-Roy, late Duke of Grafton. Early adopting his father's opinions, he became a favourite at Court, and assisting at the Coronation of George I., was at this time a Knight of the Garter, and Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland. He held the Recordership of Coventry until his death in May, 1757, and the City presented his Lordship with its Freedom at "Park Gates" on his return from Ireland. He married Henrietta, daughter of Charles Somerset, Marquis of Worcester, and on the death of his mother in 1722, inherited the Earldom of Arlington, and Viscounty of Thetford. His daughters: Caroline, married William, second Earl Harrington ; and Isabel, Francis, first Marquis of Hertford ; whence, in a measure, arose the after connection of those families with the City.

The Coventry Council House at this time made great efforts to raise the money required by the Court of Chancery to settle their defalcations in the matters of Sir Thomas White's Trust. Parties were pretty evenly balanced in the Town, and the effect of the Charity, if applied to a purpose amongst the poorer voters at an election, told. In July, 1720, they made known that they had raised the required £2,241 1s. 3d., and having paid that sum, appealed to the House of Lords, praying that the decree of 1711 should be reversed. Influence was brought to bear, and in 1723 Lord Chancellor Macclesfield gave them back the power to dispose of the Charity.

to talk over Queen Anne's High Church inclinations, and Dr. Sacheverel's prosecution, whilst the Jacobites met principally at their own houses to drink success to "the King over the water." "Toby's Coffee House," kept by Mr. Edward King, was a favourite resort of the Tories. King had been apprenticed to his uncle, Mr. Abel Roper, a London bookseller, and proprietor of the "Post Boy;" he obtained the nickname of "Toby" whilst giving close attendance to his uncle; but getting into trouble through publishing a pamphlet reflecting upon the Ministry, and refusing to give the name of the author, he suffered six months imprisonment; after which he returned to Coventry, when his family took a house for him, where "Toby sold strong ale, coffee, and drams, and entertained his friends with his squints and conundrums." It was frequented by the Tory party on account of Toby's standing to his text, and the company observing "he had no sign, they thought none so fit to hang at the door as his own sweet phiz, which they therefore desired Mr. Fry, who drew all their pictures, to take upon a board of Toby's own providing," and for many years it did duty outside the house.

The election took place on a Tuesday in February, and the poll, which had hitherto been taken at the Gaol Hall, was recorded at a booth erected near the Mayor's Parlour, in Cross Cheaping, where the business of the Magistrates was usually transacted. "Halbert men" were stationed at the doors, and refused admittance to certain voters. A writer of the time says: "The Whig Magistrates used threats and violent methods, and several persons were taken to Gaol until after the election for crying 'Hales and Skipwith.' The Sheriffs rejected 211 votes of Tories (said to be good), because they would have polled for Hales and Skipwith, and admitted 67, who had no right whatever, in order to make up the numbers in the books and return their men Oughton and Samwell, having no further Freemen to poll unless they made them; when, having a majority, they adjourned to a Whig house called the Star, and would not poll the Tory voters, the constables keeping them back with their staves. At eight in the evening many went to the Star, and demanded to poll for Hales and Skipwith; the Sheriffs declared they would poll no more. But when all was quiet, and the people in bed, the bellman gave notice that all such Freemen as had not polled must go to the Star Inn immediately and vote; hearing which, numbers got up and went there, but the constables drove them away with force, without a man being polled." The numbers in the books then standing—

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| Colonel A. Oughton (Whig) ... | ... | ... | 687 |
| Sir T. Samwell (Whig) ... | ... | ... | 670 |
| Sir Christopher Hales (Tory) ... | ... | ... | 541 |
| Sir Fulwar Skipwith (Tory) ... | ... | ... | 539 |

the Sheriffs returned

SIR THOMAS SAMWELL, BART., AND COLONEL ADOLPHUS OUGHTON,

"their party openly boasting that Parliament would justify their proceedings." The Tories declared the position to be—

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|------|----------------------------------|------|
| Sir C. Hales polled | 542 | Sir F. Skipwith polled... .. | 536 |
| Freemen refused at poll | 211 | Freemen refused at poll | 211 |
| Tories remaining unpolled | 341 | Tories remaining unpolled | 341 |
| Total | 1094 | Total | 1088 |
| Sir T. Samwell polled | 670 | Colonel A. Oughton polled | 687 |
| Polled, not being free | 67 | Polled, not being free... .. | 67 |
| Total | 603 | Total | 620 |

The losing candidates petitioned the House on the 30th March against the return, but the elections having gone vastly in favour of the Court and Whig party, no attention was given.

The new Members were cousins. Sir Thomas Samwell, second Baronet, was the son of Sir Thomas Samwell, first Baronet, of Upton, and Anne, daughter of Sir John Godschalk, of Atherstone. He was born in April, 1687, and spent much of his early life in travelling on the Continent. His father's death occurred in 1693, and the Upton estate came into his possession. An ancestor, Mr. William Samwell, a Cornish gentleman, had purchased the property from Sir Richard Knightley, about the sixteenth century, and the family sprang from the Samwells of Restormel Castle, Cornwall, two of whom were auditors to Henry VII., and Elizabeth, respectively. The home of Sir Thomas was chiefly built like his friend Mr. Neale's house at Allesley, of red brick with stone dressings, in or about, the time of William and Mary, and was situate three miles from Northampton, overlooking the Nene Valley. As at Allesley, the front of the Hall is approached through an avenue of trees, where the little red squirrels, which gave the arms to the family, may yet be observed playing merrily amidst the leaves and branches. From the numerous fine paintings at Upton Hall, and at Duston House, near thereto, it is clear that Sir Thomas and his family were considerable patrons to the artists of their day. At the Hall there is a full-length portrait of Sir Thomas, and his children, and Mercier's fine painting, at Duston, shows a merry party of gentlemen celebrating an event now forgotten—perhaps Samwell's return for Coventry. In it Sir Thomas is attended by his favourite black servant, Cæsar Parisetti, and is seated with his friends, John Neale, William Wilner, William Piers, and General de Jean, at table, drinking from the Upton loving-cup, with Mr. Floyd, who is crowned with a wreath, presiding. At Upton there is another of Mercier's paintings, wherein a gipsy is shown telling one of Sir Thomas's daughters (who is attended by her brother) how many lovers she has ; whilst Cæsar, with extended hand behind her back, shows the fortune-teller the number with his fingers. There is a picture at Allesley Park, by the same artist, called "the Card Players," in which Sir Thomas and Mr. John Neale are seen at play ; the

former, whose cards are exposed, has a good hand, whilst the redoubtable Cæsar, from behind the latter, is ready to indicate to his master what to play. Amongst an excellent collection of paintings at Duston House, are many connected with the Samwell family, and amongst them, those of Sir Thomas Samwell, John Neale, Esq., and Sir Adolphus Oughton, all of whom were Members for Coventry. Sir Thomas married twice, first Millicent, daughter of Dr. Thomas Fuller, of Hatfield (the Church historian), in 1709. This lady died in 1716; and four years after, he married Mary, daughter of Gilbert Clarke, Esq., of Chilcote, Derbyshire, who died at Upton in 1758. His children by the first wife were Sir Thomas Samwell (third Baronet), Richard, Millicent, Frances, and Mary; by his second wife, Sir Wenman Samwell (fourth and last Baronet), Catherine, and Dorothy. His memorial in Upton Church adds the following:—

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mortgage the Whitmore Park estate to Lord Guildford, to pay off his brother's and sister's fortunes, and in order to retain his seat for Coventry, impoverished his property greatly. In 1715 he sold the Willenhall estate. Dying unmarried, his remaining possessions came to Sir Edward Hales, third Baronet, but the debts were so large, that an Act of Parliament was obtained for the sale of the Coventry property ; including the White Friars and Whitmore estates ; to John, Duke of Montague, to pay them off. Sir Edward removed to Lincoln, and the connection of the family with Coventry ceased.

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CHAPTER XXXV.

RETALIATION: THE RIGHT OF SWEARING IN THE FREEMEN.

George I., continued (1721 to 1727).

End of the first Septennial Parliament—Candidates for new Assembly: Sir Adolphus Oughton, Bart., and John Neale, Esq., Whigs; Sir Fulwar Skipwith and Hon. Fulwar Craven, Tories—The election—Mobs—Riots—Tory preparation for retaliation—A Whig writer's account of the contest—Proceedings—Riot Act read—Scenes on the election day—Whigs poll first—Tory mob secure booth—Poll adjourned—Flight of the Sheriffs—Mayor, and an Alderman, hurt—Tory mob withdrawn—Sheriffs adjourn for day—Return of mob—Sir Adolphus Oughton and Mr. John Neale declared elected—Mr. W. Bromley's narrative of contest—Account of Mr. John Neale and his family—Petitions—Heard by the Committee—Messrs. Oughton and Neale not duly elected—Swearing in of Freemen given to Corporation—Rioters ordered into custody of Sergeant-at-Arms—Released—A second contest—The Corporation's "Every evil scheme"—Return of Sir Adolphus Oughton, Bart., and John Neale, Esq.—Sir F. Skipwith's petition, unheard—Biographical notice of Hon. Fulwar Craven—Death of George I.

LONG before the first Septennial Parliament ended on 10th March, 1722, it became known that Sir Thomas Samwell would not again come forward at Coventry. Sir Adolphus Oughton, with Mr. John Neale, of Allesley Park, became the acknowledged Whig and Corporation candidates. Sir Fulwar Skipwith brought forward the Hon. Fulwar Craven, brother of Earl Craven, as his colleague in the Tory interest, and an especially severe contest ensued. The new notions of assembling mobs in order to secure the poll booth, and to cut off hostile electors from the poll; assaulting or detaining them until all was over, were now in full use. Formidable riots took place, and both sides had crowds of partizans, but the Tories, with the remembrance of the last election before them, made every preparation to withstand the Corporation's illicit tactics, in order now to be able to poll their voters, and if not, to resort to retributive measures. A Whig writer has left the following account of this election:—

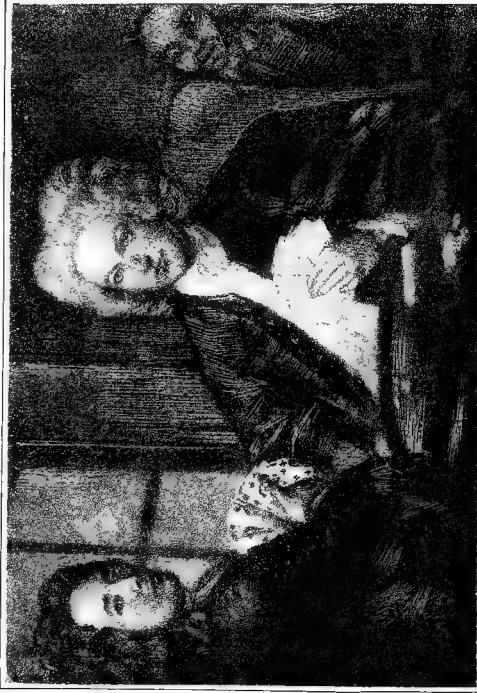
"The Tories endeavoured to return their men using violence; sticks and clubs were provided from Warwick, and elsewhere, and whole horse loads of them were brought into Coventry before the election, or taken to Combe Abbey, where many persons were armed on Saturday and Monday. On the last day, Lord Craven and his friends marched into the City, at the head of 2,000 men, horse and foot, with green twigs and leaves in their hats, armed, colours flying, drums beating, and trumpets sounding. They began rioting, smashed many windows, stayed those who had no colours, and cried, "Down with the Rump! Down with the King's Head! No Hanoverians! No seven years Parliaments!" At the Cross a luckless Sheriff was directing the rebuilding of the booth—he was seized, knocked down, wounded, and had his head broken; but the constables



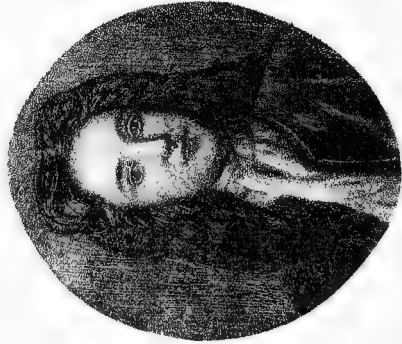
HENRY NEALE, ESQ.,
Returned Member for Coventry, 1701.
Died, 1730.



CHARLES SPENCER,
3RD EARL OF SUNDERLAND.
Recorder of Coventry, 1710. Died, 1722.



"THE CARD PLAYERS."—SIR THOMAS SAMWELL AND JOHN NEALE, ESQ.
From the Painting by Merder, at Alldey Park, Coventry.



SIR THOMAS SAMWELL, BART.,
Member for Coventry, 1715.
Died, 1757.



CHARLES FITZ-ROY,
2ND DUKE OF GRAFTON,
Recorder of Coventry, 1722. Died, 1757.



JOHN NEALE, ESQ.,
Member for Coventry, 1722.
Died, 1746.



SIR ADOLPHUS OUGHTON, KNT. & BART., K.B.,
Member for Coventry, 1715.
Died, 1738.

coming from the Mayor's Parlour effected his rescue, and seized an offender, but not before thirty of their number were seriously hurt. At the wish of the Mayor, one of the Aldermen went to the Cross steps to read the Riot Act, but was prevented, and had to fly for his life; whereupon the mob pulled up the paving stones, and smashed the glass and woodwork of the windows of their opponents houses."

From the same, and another, account, it appears that on the eve of the election "Sir Adolphus, attended by his mob, went to his opponents headquarters, and proposed to poll by scores, wards, or alphabetically." This was refused, but six Commissioners were appointed from either side; when the Whigs proposed that neither the parties or the constables should carry staves, the Tories refused to agree, and the Rev. Mr. Kimberley declared the arrangement void. On the election day (Tuesday, 3rd April), the Tories drove their adversaries mob before them, but the Whigs, re-assembling in the Women's Market Place, took possession of the booth, polled first, and as quickly as possible. The Tories, led by one Buggs, having received many sticks and staves, "thrown to them in bundles out of an inn window not far from the booth, fell upon the Whigs, and not sparing the Sheriffs within," who, after an adjournment had been proposed by Messrs. Oughton and Neale, without Mr. Skipwith's knowledge (Mr. Craven being unwell), fled. Meanwhile, the Whigs secured the Sheriffs (Messrs. Humphrey Lewis and John Shaw), and took them into an adjoining public-house, the windows of which being soon smashed, "they retreated to the garret for safety." As the Mayor (John Kilsby, a mercer), was retreating to his house, he was hit with a stone, and an Alderman was severely hurt for interfering with several persons who were taking his Worship's gate from off its hinges, in order to block up the passage into the Women's Market, so as to secure the Whig mob therein. Meanwhile the Sheriffs and clerks refused to go back to the booth, but eventually Sir Thomas Gery proposed an adjournment to the next day, and took the Tory mob with him into the Churchyard, in order that the Sheriffs should come and adjourn their Court; but Mr. Thomas Kimberley called the mob back, inciting them to return and block the Sheriffs in the booth; the officials, however, hastily scrambling over the barriers, escaped into the Parlour. They then declared the poll could not safely proceed, and the Sheriffs were desired to make return according to the majority of votes taken, which they agreed to do, "unless something occurred before the next morning," which not taking place, they returned

SIR ADOLPHUS OUGHTON, BART., AND MR. JOHN NEALE.

The late Tory Speaker, W. Bromley (Oxford University), writing to Colonel James Graham (Westmoreland) on April 6th, 1722, gives the following account:—

"The election at Coventry began on Tuesday, when there were polled about one hundred for Sir Adolphus Oughton and John Neale, and six for Craven and Skipwith. There were about a thousand voters in the street, when, upon pretence of adjourning for an hour, the former, with the Magistrates, carried away the Sheriffs. They would not suffer any but their own creatures to come near them—not even their wives—kept them up all night, and would not let them go until

they had forced them to make a return, which was not signified to the Freemen until all was over. The Sheriffs were two poor scoundrels, but they durst not trust them. Oughton had brought all the Freemen serving in the troops of Great Britain and Ireland, and living in Chelsea Hospital, to the election, and *they appeared in their regimental clothes and swords.*"

Mr. John Neale, of Allesley, Warwickshire, and Cherington, Gloucestershire, was the eldest son of Mr. Henry Neale, of Allesley Park. He was born in 1687, and had represented Chipping Wycombe in the last Parliament, having been elected through a vacancy in 1721. He presented the Coventry Council House with his portrait, in which he is shown in military dress, mounted upon a bay charger. The Neales moved in a fast-going, hard-drinking set, and a portion of their estates are traditionally said to have been lost by card play. The Rectory of Allesley is also thought to have been sold to pay off election debts, incurred at Coventry. Captain Joseph Neale, of the Horse Guards, brother of Mr. John Neale, was no abstainer, and directed that the four lines—

"Ah! poor Joe Neale!
Who loved good ale!
For want of good ale!
Here lies poor Joe Neale!"

should be placed on his tombstone in Allesley Church, but the family objecting, only the first line was placed there, and so remains.

Petitions against the return of Messrs. Oughton and Neale were soon presented to the House from the Coventry Tories, and the diary of a resident "shows that the question of swearing in the Freemen was also considered at the same time." It was proved "that the Freemen were not legally sworn according to ancient Charter, for all boys bound apprentice were bound before the Company of the trade they were bound to, and sworn in Freemen by their respective Companies. It was alleged that none but the Body Corporate had a right to swear in Freemen. The Corporation being in the Court interest, the election was set aside, and the power of swearing in Freemen given to them." A Committee resolved "that notorious and outrageous riots, tumults, and seditions had existed at the late election, in violation of the freedom of election, mostly caused by the friends and agents of the petitioners." The question of right of election was again declared "to be in such Freemen only as had served seven years apprenticeship to one and the same trade in the City or suburbs thereof, and did not receive alms or weekly charity, *such Freemen being duly sworn and enrolled by the Corporation.*" It was found that Messrs. Oughton and Neale were not duly elected, and that the late election was void. Charles Buggs was adjudged to be the chief promoter of the riots; and that William Wells, George Newcombe, Sir Thomas Gery, Knt., Thomas Kimberley, Thomas Wright, George Aldridge, and Benjamin Holden had assisted therein; for which they were all ordered into the custody of the Sergeant-at-Arms, but after a short time, on expressing regret, released. It will at once be apparent how

great a gain for future electioneering purposes the power of swearing in the Freemen gave the Corporation, whilst the abuses which followed will be seen hereafter.

The second contest took place at the end of November, in bad weather. The same candidates as before addressed the Freemen. There was, as usual, rioting in front of the booth, and the diary before quoted adds: "The Corporation having the full power of swearing, they would admit but very few except those in their own interest; but so many deceived them, that Skipwith and Craven would have been chosen had they not have acted every evil scheme that could be thought of." The poll was declared 11th December in favour of

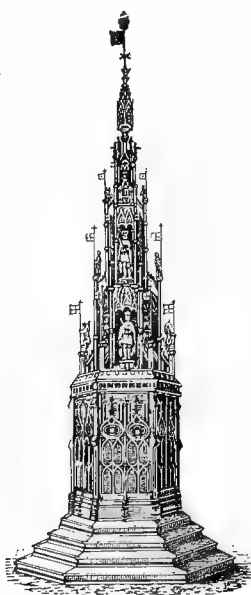
SIR ADOLPHUS OUGHTON, KNT., AND BART., AND JOHN NEALE, ESQ.

Sir Fulwar Skipwith again petitioned Parliament against his opponents return, but without effect, and he renewed his petition during the second Session, but finally withdrew it, on finding it was not likely to be considered whilst the Whigs were in power.

The Hon. Fulwar Craven was the second son of William, Lord Craven, who died at Combe in 1711, and Elizabeth, daughter of Humberston Skipwith, of Newbold Hall. He was the brother of William, third Baron Craven, then (1722) living, who was the same year suspected and named, with other Lords, by a Committee of the House, as being privy to a plot formed by discontented Whigs, Tories, and Jacobites, but he thoroughly repelled the insinuation of disloyalty. The Hon. Fulwar Craven succeeded to the title of Earl Craven in August, 1739, and died, unmarried, in 1764.

When about this time, wards first Earl of Harrington), Bath; his Esquires were Sir Esq., and William Hawley, Esq.

William Stanhope, Esq. (afterwards made a Knight of the Thomas Samwell, John Neale, George I. died on June 10th, 1727.




THE COVENTRY CROSS.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

WHIG PARTY DIVISIONS AND DIVIDED REPRESENTATION.

George II. (1727 to 1742).

The King and Prince of Wales—A new Parliament—Sir Adolphus Oughton and John Neale, Esq., chosen—Increased Whig majority—Candidates eligibility and Freemen's voting—Coventry Park—An Account of Loans and Charities printed—Action of the Council House thereon—Coventry petition against Excise scheme—Another Parliament called—Candidates: Messrs. Oughton and Neale (Whigs), and John Bird (Independent)—Messrs. Oughton and Bird returned—Mr. Neale's petition—Bablake Church Act—Petition renewed—Mr. Bird's qualification—His statements thereon—Colonel Oughton accepts office—His death—A bye-election—Candidates: John Neale, Esq., and George Fitz-Roy, Earl of Euston—Mr. Bird aids the latter—Mr. Neale returned—Lord Euston applies for Parliament's redress—Mr. Neale declared not duly elected—A new writ issued—Mr. Bird appointed Commissioner of Stamp Duties—Retires from Parliament—A second writ issued—Election—Earl of Euston and John Neale, Esq., chosen—Account of the former—Spanish depredations to British interests—Votes of Members thereon—An opponent's statement—Calling the Parliament of 1741—Candidates: Earl of Euston and John Neale (Whigs), William Groves (Tory)—Corporation scheming—Numbers polled—Return of Messrs. Euston and Groves—"The honest Sheriff" and his entertainment—Fall of Sir Robert Walpole—A new Ministry formed.

EORGE II. ascended the Throne on the 14th of June, and Prince Frederick was created Prince of Wales in November. The latter, with views greatly antagonistic to the King, had slight political connections at Coventry. The Parliament was dismissed on the 17th of July, and a new one summoned for 28th November. Coventry, on the 24th August, again returned

SIR ADOLPHUS OUGHTON, KNT., AND BART., AND JOHN NEALE, ESQ.

The elections were as disappointing to the Tories as to the Jacobites, for the Whig majority had increased. The rights of Borough elections having caused great disputes, it was now enacted that the privilege of voting should remain in accordance with the last determination of the House; and every candidate for a Borough was required to have an estate of at least £300 per annum.

The Corporation at this time had obtained the Coventry Park on lease, and the Freemen obtained the right of pasturing cattle in the Park.

During the litigation respecting White's Charity, considerable party feeling prevailed, and the disposal of the funds, even so soon as 1733, had grown lax again. "An Account of the Loans, Benefactions, and Charities belonging to the City of Coventry," was now printed, which raised a flutter in the breasts of the Aldermen. It was compiled by Dr. E. Jackson, and the Rev. S. Carte, from documents furnished by Mr. Caleb Cobson, who, during his Mayoralty in 1724, had transcribed many of the public records and journals of the Council Chamber. His actions giving rise to the anger of his fellow-members, he was expelled the Council House, and restored by a *writ of Mandamus*, but again expelled. The publication was as truthful a statement of the various gifts to the City as could be obtained, and the collectors challenged its refutation. The effect was to make the Corporation more careful, and retain some of the smaller Charities for the future.

When Sir Robert Walpole proposed his Excise scheme, there was great opposition to the Bill, and petitions were preferred by the Lord Mayor, etc., of London, and the cities of Coventry and Nottingham. The nation became alarmed and excited against it, and Walpole eventually thought best to let it drop.

However much Mr. Bromley, son of Queen Anne's Speaker, and his party desired the repeal of the Septennial Act, and advocated a more frequent calling together, the system was continued, and the Assembly dissolved on the 17th of April, 1734, when a Royal proclamation called a new one for the 13th of June following. The Ministry, and their opponents also, used every endeavour to secure the voice of the people, and bribery had increased by the longer Parliaments. The old Whig Members appeared at Coventry, together with a townsman, Mr. John Bird, whose family had introduced the silk trade into Coventry. Walpole's Excise scheme was not forgotten, and Mr. Bird received considerable support, whilst his wife, Mrs. Rebecca Bird, greatly aided her husband, who, after much contention, managed to throw out the Allesley Squire, and gain a seat, when, on the 14th of May,

SIR ADOLPHUS OUGHTON, KNT., AND BART., AND JOHN BIRD, ESQ., were returned. At the elections there was a gain to the opposition, but it did not shake the stability of the Ministers.

Mr. Neale petitioned the House against the return of Messrs. Bird and Oughton, and, objecting to their qualifications, complained of violent outrages and corruptions, but it was not heard during the first Session of Parliament.

An Act of Parliament was obtained in 1735-6 to make the Church at Bablake, in Coventry, a Parish Church, and the living a Rectory.

Mr. Neale renewed his petition during the next Session, and altered the complaints, reserving those only which related to Mr. Bird's qualification. In 1741, Mr. Bird addressed a letter to the Right Hon. Lord Sydney Beauclere, Vice-Chamberlain to the King, together with his case, which he printed for the information of his Coventry

friends. By the Act of 9 Anne, every Burgess elected to serve in Parliament was required to have freehold or copyhold property producing £300 annually above reprisals. Before the election, Mr. Bird possessed only freehold estates in Coventry, Kenilworth, and Kingsbury, producing about £93 per annum, and to make himself eligible, shortly before the election, endeavoured to purchase the Grange estate, near Atherstone. This fell through, and instead, he purchased estates at Plumstead and Dartford, in Kent, from his friend Sir Thomas Lombe (a gentleman in the silk trade, who visited Italy in 1747, and succeeded in learning the method of working silk and making sketches of the Italian machinery. He returned home, and taking out a patent, established a mill at Derby for the introduction of the trade. Parliament granted him a large sum, and he was Knighted, but the Italian silk merchants were so annoyed with the robbing of their process that they are said to have sent agents to poison him), for £3,800, producing £159 5s. 4d., and one at Broadwell, Gloucestershire, from another friend, Mr. Selwin, for £1,500, worth £59 per annum. The conveyances were made upon the 23rd April, 1734, before the election; thus he was qualified under the Act, having freeholds producing £311 5s. 4d. annually. There were doubts amongst Mr. Neale's friends as to the *bonâ fides* of these conveyances, which were increased in October, 1734, when Mr. Bird re-disposed of the Kent and Gloucester properties to their late owners. Mr. Bird, however, purchased a freehold estate in Threadneedle Street, London, from Mr. Samuel Craghead, of the value of £229 per annum, but through the law's delays, the conveyance was not executed until July, 1735, so that for nine months he did not possess the proper qualification. It was objected that Mr. Bird had sat and voted during this period, but the Statute alluded to the annual value at the date of the election, and thus the offence, if any, was that he had sat and voted when he should have been deemed incapable. His opponents censured, and asked him to vacate his seat, but forthwith he instructed counsel, prepared for his defence during the second Session, and wrote asking his colleague, Sir Adolphus, to attend and speak to facts known only to him, which were necessary for defence. The Colonel had accepted a public office, and was then in Ireland. He disappointed Mr. Bird through illness, and, unfortunately, died at the commencement of the third Session (1736), when an election ensued. Mr. John Neale again came forward, and was opposed by George Fitz-Roy, commonly called the Earl of Euston, the son of the Duke of Grafton. Mr. Neale's friends offered to compromise with Mr. Bird if he would lend them his influence, but he declined, and aided his Lordship, who "had the appearance of having a considerable majority of voters in his favour." "Notwithstanding which, he was not permitted by the Returning Officers to poll more than fifty of his voters in two days, and was obliged to apply to Parliament for redress." On the 15th

MR. JOHN NEALE

was returned.

Lord Euston's petition to the House came on for hearing on the 22nd March, 1737. His counsel produced evidence of the riot, which caused the poll to be discontinued; whilst the counsel for the sitting Member denied that it was occasioned by the Magistrates or the Member, but said he was not instructed to oppose the petition. Mr. Bird was heard from his place in the House, and it was resolved that great riots and tumults had occurred at the Coventry election, and also that Mr. Neale was not duly elected. The seat was declared vacant, and a new writ issued. Threats were again used about the unseating of Mr. Bird, but during the hearing of the petition that gentleman received an appointment as Commissioner of Stamp Duties, and thereupon vacated the seat. Mr. Bird says he neither asked for, or expected the office, and did not accept it "through any apprehension as to his qualification, but for the peace and quiet of Coventry," and at the solicitation of Lord Euston and Mr. Neale's friends.

Messrs. Euston and Neale were the only candidates at the election, which took place upon separate writs, for Mr. Bird and his family now endeavoured to reconcile and join interests, and on the 12th of April,

GEORGE FITZ-ROY, EARL OF EUSTON., AND JOHN NEALE, ESQ.,

were elected, and sat until the dissolution on the 27th of April, 1741.

George Fitz-Roy, Earl of Euston, was the eldest son of Charles, second Duke of Grafton, and Henrietta, his wife, daughter of Charles, Marquis of Worcester. He was born 24th August, 1715, and was one of four young noblemen who supported His Majesty's train at the Coronation of George II. The Earl was 26 years of age, and is thought to have married the Lady Dorothy Boyle, which seems extremely doubtful. There is a picture, said to be of his Lordship, and Lady Dorothy, but more probably of Lord Euston and his sister, at the London residence of the Duke of Grafton. He died in July, 1747, and never succeeded to the Dukedom.

As British interest abroad suffered by Spanish depredations, the King and his Minister, Sir Robert Walpole, desired to enter into a convention with Spain in order to effect a settlement, which was opposed in the Commons by his opponents as a concession of British interests. The tactics, money, and majority of the Ministry, however, had their effect, for many of the minority left the House disgusted, or on "being bribed to do so." Lord Euston voted for the convention. Mr. Neale stayed away, and for his abstention, a political opponent writes, "his wife was to be appointed dresser to the Queen at a salary of £200." This lady, Mrs. Frances Neale, was a daughter of Roger Pope, Esq., of Oswestry, and, whether the statement be true or a libel, their second daughter, Anna, was a maid of honour to Queen Caroline, whilst Mr. Neale received the office of Controller to the young Princesses, sisters of George III. At length England declared war against Spain, and a change of Ministry occurred in 1741. Meanwhile, the Pension, or Place, Bill passed the Commons. Mr. Neale voted

for it, and Lord Euston against it, but the Lords threw it out, when writs were issued for a new Parliament, returnable 25th June, 1741. Lord Euston and Mr. Neale again offered themselves in the Whig interest, and were opposed by Mr. William Groves, a townsman of moderate Tory views. There was a short contest, which commenced May 5th, and ended May 11th. The Corporation swore in various Freemen at the Mayor's Parlour, and took them to poll at the booth adjoining the Parlour door, but in spite of their scheming, only succeeded in returning one of their men, the numbers being—

| | | | |
|-----------------------|-----|-----|------|
| Lord Euston (Whig) | ... | ... | 1299 |
| William Groves (Tory) | ... | ... | 993 |
| John Neale (Whig) ... | ... | ... | 919 |

and whereupon the return of

GEORGE FITZ-ROY, LORD EUSTON., AND WILLIAM GROVES, ESQ.,

followed. The Sheriffs were Messrs. Samuel Vale and John Gamble. The latter is said to have endeavoured to do what was right without fear or favour, and became known as "the honest Sheriff," in distinction of other similar officers who had failed in their duty, and on the 13th of August he gave a great entertainment at the White Bear to his many friends, in a large booth erected in the inn yard.

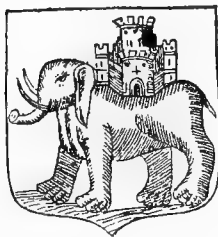
William Groves (or Grove), LL.D., was an influential citizen, who lived in Cross Cheaping, at the house now occupied as an ironmongery establishment nearly opposite Ironmonger Row, and he also had a private residence at Honily, near Kenilworth. He was fond of the good company of his fellow-citizens, for the Rev. Mr. Shakespeare, in his poem upon "The Rise, and Grandeur, and Decay of the Ancient City of Coventry," makes mention of the Member, and from the society he is placed in, no doubt he was a happy man.

"Only one, she, bright Molly at the Crown,
Allow'd, confess'd, a beauty by the Town,
Claims place, how fair her cap, how white her gloves,
How sweet she warbles to the happy Groves."

For his integrity, he was greatly entrusted by his constituents, and in Parliament was "invariably steady in his fruitless endeavours for the defence of injured liberty, steadfast against all attacks, corrupted powers, and the insult of triumphant opposition."

On Monday, 20th July, 1741, the first newspaper printed and published in Coventry, "Jobson's Coventry Mercury," was issued, price twopence, with a stamp, and consisted of a sheet of four pages, each 16 inches by 10. Jobson's establishment was in Hay Lane, and his venture professed to be a High Church and Tory newspaper.

Sir Robert Walpole's majority of about 100 in the old House of Commons was, owing to the endeavours of the Prince of Wales and his enemies to hoist him from power, altered in the new. He resigned in 1742, and a new Ministry was formed.



City of Coventry.

YOU *John Redford* *Lieutenant* do
sincerely Promise and Swear that you will be faith-
ful, and bear true Allegiance to his Myetly, King

GEORGE: And you shall and will be Obedient and
Obeisant unto the Mayor and Magistrates of this City,
the Land, Liberties, Francises and Lawfull customs thereof
you shall Maintain, and the same in all that you can or
may Lawfully defend and keep harmless. You shall be
tributary to all Contributions, Taxes, Tallage, Summons,
Scot and Lot, and all other Charges to be laid within this
City, bearing your part as any other Freeman shall or
ought. You shall Maintain and Defend the King's Peace
in that you may: And you shall know of no Gatherings
or Conspiracies mov'd or made against the King's Peace,
but you shall let the Mayor or Justices of this City know
the same. You shall not with-hold, Impair, or conceal
the with-holding, Concealing, or Impairing of any Eviden-
ces or Charters belonging to this City, but you shall warn
the Mayor or Justices of this City of the same. And you
shall not colourably bear, or seem to bear, or allow any
Horse, Mare, Gelding, Colt, Pilley, Cow or Heifer, or
any other Cattle of any other Man's but of your own,
either in the Park or in the Commons of this City by any
craft or cawtil whatsoever. All these Points and Articles
you shall Swear well and truly to keep to your power, ac-
cording to the Laws of God and this Realm, and the law-
ful customs of this City, whereof you are now a Sworn
Freeman. So Help you God.

Witness my hand the Seventh day of May 1741.
John Layton Mayor

THE OATH OF A COVENTRY FREEMAN, 1741.

(From the Author's Collection.)

CHAPTER XXXVII.

ADVANCE OF THE PRETENDER: THE CONTESTS AND "THE CHRONICLES."

George II., continued (1743 to 1760).

Landing of the Young Pretender—His advance into England—At Derby—Preparations to stay his progress on London—The camp on Meriden Heath—Position of Coventry—A regiment that would not fight on foot—Inhabitants and soldiers quarters—Retreat of the Pretender—Meriden camp broken up—Defeat of the Pretender—End of the rebellion—Ministerial crisis—New Parliament summoned—Deaths of Mr. John Neale and Lord Euston—The election—Candidates: Mr. W. Groves (Tory); and W. Stanhope, Lord Petersham (Whig)—Chosen without opposition—Biography of the latter—Publication of the earliest known "Chronicle"—Lord Petersham chosen, but elects to sit, for Bury St. Edmunds—A bye-election—Contest—Candidates: Mr. Samuel Greatheed and Mr. Robert Bird—The Corporation and the polling—Proposed return of their man—Mr. Bird demands scrutiny—Granted, but closed on his gaining ground—Mr. Samuel Greatheed returned elected—Another "Chronicle" published—Biographies of Mr. Greatheed and Mr. Bird—End of Parliament—Candidates for new one: Mr. W. Groves (Tory), Mr. Sam. Greatheed and Mr. James Hewitt (Whigs and Corporation)—Division in the Council Chamber—Numbers polled—Mr. Hewitt's scrutiny—Messrs. Greatheed and Groves returned—Wars and administrative changes—Whig endeavours to gain the Freemen—Mayor, John Hewitt's, feast—Death of Recorder, the Duke of Grafton—Thomas Lord Archer chosen instead—Account of his introduction to office—Biography—Corporation regain Bablake Trust—Death of George II.

PRINCE CHARLES EDWARD, the Young Pretender, landed in Scotland 25th July, 1745, raised the Standard, and gathered the clans to his aid. After taking Edinburgh on the 17th, and being victorious at the Battle of Preston Pans on the 20th, he resolved to march into England, having hopes that the Jacobites there would follow as heartily as the Scotch. He took Carlisle, marched to Preston, Wigan, and Manchester, where a few joined him, and wore the white cockade. He proceeded to Derby on the 4th of December. The Government were in great straits, for the Prince's advance was almost wholly unchecked, and the forces occupied out of England. Its principal General, the Duke of Cumberland, hastily summoned from abroad, was surprised, for he considered Charles was proceeding to Wales, and had barely time to place troops between the Prince and London. But camps were hastily ordered to be formed at Finchley; Whitley Common, and Meriden Heath (near Coventry), Lichfield, and elsewhere. The news that the Pretender was coming caused great alarm amongst the peaceful citizens of Coventry, but those Jacobites favourable to the Prince thought matters too risky to take action. A

regiment of horse had been hastily raised to resist the Scotch rebels, but having orders to fight on foot, refused, and were trained to act as Dragoons in the Park. It was ordered that the inhabitants should keep lights in their windows at night, and constantly soldiers were quartered upon them, according to the size of their houses. A person having two rooms had four or five billeted upon him, and so on in proportion, and so small was the accommodation, that they were compelled to sit up, for the relays of soldiers to have their beds, and suffered great privations. On the 6th, however, the Prince suddenly retreated from Derby towards Scotland. The Duke had sought to cover his position on the high road to London; he learned of the retreat when at Coventry on the 8th, and sent on General Hawley from Meriden Heath, with a thousand cavalry, and a thousand foot mounted on horses, collected in the neighbourhood, to harass the Scots, and broke up the camp there. For some time the Jacobites cause was successful in Scotland, but the Battle of Culloden, on 26th April, 1746, put an end to their hopes.

There was a Ministerial crisis this year, and Lord Harrington resigned the Seals of Office 10th of February, 1746. The King endeavoured to place Lords Granville and Bath at the head of affairs, but they were unable to form a Ministry, and George became compelled to reinstate the Pelhams; and Pitt was introduced to the Cabinet.

This Parliament ended 18th of June, 1747, a new one meeting on the 13th of August. Mr. John Neale, the late M.P., died 19th December, 1746, and Lord Euston paid nature's debt in July, 1747. Mr. William Groves came forward in the Tory interest, whilst the Whig, together with that of the Corporation, was represented by William Stanhope, Lord Petersham. The latter was the twin son of William, first Earl of Harrington, and Anne, daughter of Colonel Griffith, and was born 18th December, 1719. He entered the Army, and was appointed Colonel of the 2nd Regiment of Grenadier Guards. He was a Deputy-Lieutenant for Derbyshire, and had represented Aylesbury in the last Parliament. He had, prior to this election, married Caroline, the eldest daughter of the Duke of Grafton. Their union was a happy one, and they had a large family. He became Earl of Harrington on the death of his father in December, 1757.

There was no opposition, and the Sheriffs on the 29th of June returned

W. GROVES, ESQ., AND W. STANHOPE, LORD VISCOUNT PETERSHAM.

The first of those curious broad-sheets, "The Chronicles," now makes its appearance. They were issued from time to time by different printers, illustrating in a quaint and curious way, the sayings and doings of the Corporation, Members, candidates, and parties at Coventry; and give very considerable information; written sometimes, perhaps, with political bias; of what was transacting in the City. Being considered too long for the text, they have been inserted in the Addenda.



PLAN OF COVE

From a Survey by S

(From a Photograph of



Lord Petersham was also chosen for Bury St. Edmunds on the 3rd July, and electing to serve for that Borough, a vacancy occurred at Coventry in December. The Corporation brought forward Mr. Samuel Greatheed, of Guy's Cliff, who was opposed by Mr. Robert Bird, of Coventry, in the Independent interest. "Never," says the diary of a resident, "did the gentlemen Corporate show themselves more assiduous than at this time, for they got a number of their friends in the Mayor's Parlour, and built a pinfold round the booth seven or eight feet high, and blocked up both ends of the Women's Market, and when it was too late, got fire-hooks and heated them hot, and pulled down the pinfold. They then said it was a riot, and closed the poll, declaring Mr. Samuel Greatheed elected." On Mr. Bird demanding a scrutiny, it was granted, but the Corporation, finding they were losing ground, closed the proceedings for the first day, and so great a disturbance occurred on the second, that Mr. Bird left the place, and the Sheriffs on the 28th December returned

MR. SAMUEL GREATHEED.

On referring to the next "Chronicle" (for which see Addenda), it will be found that there is some difference therein with this account as to the cause of riot.

Mr. Samuel Greatheed was born in 1710, and was said to possess large estates and plantations in St. Christopher, one of the West Indian islands, but he had purchased the estate of Guy's Cliffe, near Warwick, and settled down there as a country gentleman. Sir William Dugdale describes Guy's Cliffe as "a place of such delight, that to one that desires a retired life, either for his devotions or study, the like is not to be found." Mr. Greatheed built the greater part of the mansion, and effected vast improvements in the little, but picturesque, parish, a work subsequently continued by his son. Leamington was then a small village of 300 inhabitants, and Mr. Greatheed purchased about sixty acres of land on the north side of the Avon, upon which a considerable part of the new part of Leamington was built about the commencement of the nineteenth century. He married Mary, daughter of Peregrine Bertie, second Duke of Ancaster. There are two portraits of Mr. Greatheed at Guy's Cliffe, one an excellent likeness in crayon, by his son, Mr. Bertie Greatheed. Houston executed a mezzotint of the gentleman, representing him in a black wig, having a hat under his arm. He died the 2nd August, 1765, aged 55, and was buried between the transepts in St. Mary's Church, Warwick.

Mr. Robert Bird was the son of Thomas Bird, a silk merchant of Coventry, and had considerable influence in the town.

In 1753 it was proposed to widen the exceedingly narrow roadway called Grey Friars Lane, which was the entrance to the City from Warwick, but the only part of the scheme completed was the removal of a small shop at the Smithford Street corner.

The old Parliament died on the 8th of April, 1754, and another was summoned to meet 31st of May following. There was a stoutly-contested election at Coventry. Mr. William Groves (Tory) and Mr. Samuel Greatheed (Whig), with Mr. James Hewitt, a Coventry man, and a Whig, came forward as the Corporation candidates. At the time there was a division amongst the members of the Council House, whereby Aldermen Freeman and Brockhurst, with others, refused to support Mr. Hewitt, and negotiated a compact with Mr. Groves friends for their mutual advantage. This was, however, badly kept, for the finish ended thus—

| | | | |
|---------------------|-----|-----|------|
| S. Greatheed (Whig) | ... | ... | 1194 |
| W. Groves (Tory) | ... | ... | 854 |
| J. Hewitt (Whig) | ... | ... | 811 |

But Mr. Hewitt, not satisfied with the result, demanded a scrutiny, which took place at the Drapers Hall, "but the longer it lasted the further he was off," and abandoned it, when on the 29th, Messrs. Boyce and Johnson, the Sheriffs, returned

SAMUEL GREATHEED, ESQ., AND WILLIAM GROVES, ESQ.

The elections generally were in favour of the Whig Ministry, and on the death of Pelham, the Duke of Newcastle assumed the Government. The first Session was, however, but short. A new war was breaking out with France, in India, and America, and the country on the verge of the seven years war in 1756. Soon after Fox deserted Newcastle, who resigned; and Pitt at length, supported by Newcastle, formed a durable coalition Ministry of Whigs and Tories, which successfully carried on the war. During this time, parties were nearly annihilated for the moment, and the spirit of faction ceased, and became extinguished.

The Whig Member, and Mr. Hewitt, tried all means to please the Freemen, and the former acted as steward of the horse-races in Coventry Park. The Corporation having chosen Mr. John Hewitt, Mayor, he made a great feast at St. Mary's Hall, at which a large company was present, including Lord Archer, Mr. Groves, Mr. Greatheed, and Mr. J. Bird; but his relation, Mr. James Hewitt, had to decline. The invitations included Lords Grafton, Denbigh, Plymouth, Guernsey, Donegal, Leigh, Craven, and Winterton; Sir Roger Newdigate, of Arbury; Sir T. Cave, of Stanford; Sir Francis Skipwith, of Newbold; Sir Edward Boughton, of Lawford; W. Bromley, of Baginton; A. Gregory, of Stivichall; Thomas Neale, and Rev. Mr. Bree, of Allesley; Richard Bowater, of Whitley; Messrs. Dixie, Dilke, Holbeach, and many other gentlemen, with their ladies, or wives.

The Duke of Grafton had a fall from his horse when out hunting; for notwithstanding his seventy years, he still enjoyed sport. The story is told that as his Lordship lay ill, the aged Duke of Newcastle called to see him, and although desired to go quietly, rushed into the room where his friend lay, and flung himself on the bed, kissing the drowsy

individual ; as Newcastle was in the habit of kissing men. Aroused from his reverie, Lord Grafton exclaimed, "Tut, Tut ! What's here ? What's here ?" "'Tis only I, my noble lord," said Newcastle, repeating the kisses. "Only you," said the dying noble ; "Well, how can you be such a beast as to kiss such a creature as I am, all over plasters ? Get along ! Get along !" His Grace expired on the 6th May, 1757, and the Recordership of Coventry became vacant.

Thomas Lord Archer, a local nobleman, was elected by the Whigs of the Council Chamber to the vacant office, and the Town Clerk, Mr. Joseph Hewitt, in recording the ceremony on the 7th September, states : "About half an hour after twelve, the Mayor and Aldermen, in scarlet, and the Council House men, in black gowns, met at the Mayor's Parlour, and upon notice that the Recorder was come into the King's Head, and ready to receive 'em, they went thither in form, preceded by the City musick. At the door leading to the stair my Lord met 'em, and after compliments to Mr. Mayor, etc. ; without going upstairs ; they proceeded to the Council House, my Lord walking with the Mayor, and at the Council House my Lord sat on the Mayor's right hand. After entering the house I gave my Lord the oath of Recorder, and the oath of allegiance and supremacy, the Steward being detained on circuit, so that he could not attend to do it. After this my Lord and the gentlemen paid their mutual compliments to one another, and then proceeded in the manner they came to the King's Head, where my Lord gave a handsome dinner to the gentlemen of the Grand Inquest, and to the Clergy and Dissenting Ministers, and introduced to 'em his son, the Honl. Mr. Docker." Lord Archer resided at Umberslade. He was created Lord Archer, and Baron of Umberslade, 14th July, 1747. His family had settled at Umberslade in the time of Henry III., and had produced several useful men. He married Catherine, daughter of Sir Thomas Tipping, Baronet, of Wheatfield, Oxfordshire, sister of Lady Sandys. They had one son, the Hon. Andrew Archer, and two daughters. Lord Archer's London house was at the south-west corner of Covent Garden, and is shown in Hogarth's drawing, "Four Times of the Day,—Morning," in Canaletto's painting, and in Nollekin's sketch, showing Covent Garden, in which Lady Archer, the wife of Lord Andrew Archer, is shown near the house.

The Corporation had long petitioned the Lord Chancellor to fill up the Trust belonging to Bond's or Bablake Hospital, from among themselves. Only eight of the old Trust were left, the body Corporate had considerable influence at Court, and in November, 1760, they received an order whereby sixteen new Trustees were appointed out of their body. Mr. Edward Villiers, the old Treasurer, was turned out, and Mr. Alderman Bibbins elected. King George died suddenly on the 25th of October.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

LOCAL ACTS AND PROCEEDINGS.

George III. (1760 to 1768).

Proclaiming the King—Mr. John Jones "*Chronicle of the Times*"—The Freemen's rights and privileges—"Oath of a Freeman," 1761—A new Parliament called—Mr. Groves and Mr. Greatehead decline to contest—Mr. James Hewitt and the Hon. Andrew Archer, candidates for the Whigs and Corporation—Mr. Groves, on reconsideration, again comes forward—The contest—Numbers polled—Mr. Groves retires—James Hewitt, Esq., and the Hon. Andrew Archer chosen—Their biographies—The *Chronicle* and the Corporation proceedings—The Whig publicans accept ten shillings in the pound—The Scavenger Act and its workings—Spon Bridge built—Some City gates removed—Death of Mr. Samuel Greatehead—Ministerial changes—Mr. James Hewitt made a Judge—A vacancy at Coventry—No contest—Hon. Henry Seymour Conway returned—Death of Mr. Groves—The Grafton re-modelled Ministry—Act for making the Coventry Canal.

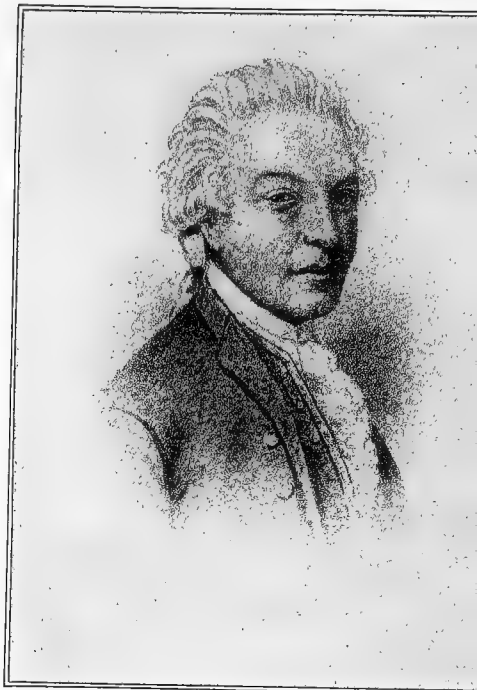
KING GEORGE was proclaimed, and on the 30th October, 1760, the Mayor and Corporation of Coventry proceeded to the Cross and read the Royal proclamation.

Another rare pamphlet at this time appears, entitled "*The Chronicle of the Times at Coventry, during the Reign of Nebuchadnezzar (George III.) the Third, King of Utopia,*" and printed by Mr. John Jones, of Cross Cheaping, Coventry, gives a graphic description of the proceedings of the Corporation from 1760 to 1776, as seen from a Tory and Jacobite view. It is amusing and instructive, and will be found in the Addenda.

Besides choosing Members for the City, the Freemen of Coventry had rights of herbage for their cattle upon the Lammas and Commonable Lands. Of the former there were about one thousand acres at this time, close to the Town, the circuit of which was ridden yearly, and the various grounds thrown open annually from Lammas to Candlemas. The owners of these lands had no right to plough them, or to take crops, or set up a rick or fence thereon, without the Freemen's consent. The Commons were open, and no turf, soil, or loam could be removed by any without the sanction of the Freemen. In time, the right of turning on cattle became restricted in number to each individual Freeman, and the Chamberlains publicly marked all beasts before booking them, for if cattle were found unmarked upon the Commons, any Freeman could have them impounded by the Pinner.



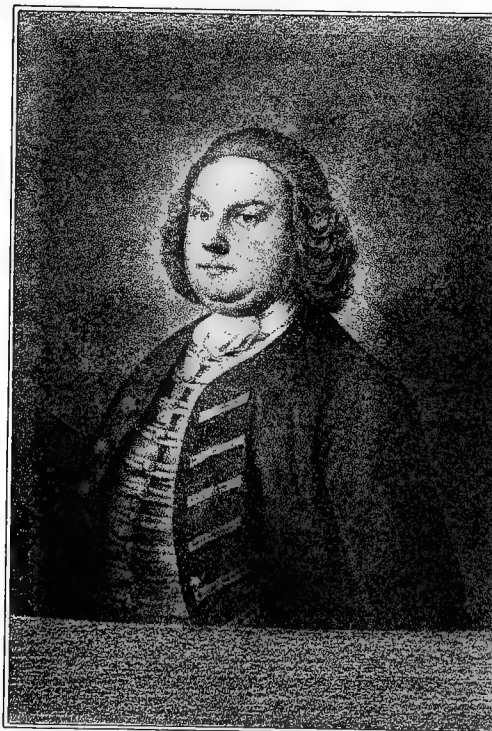
THOMAS ARCHER, LORD ARCHER (WHEN A YOUTH),
Recorder of Coventry, 1757.
Died, 1768.



ANDREW ARCHER, LORD ARCHER,
Member for Coventry, 1761. Recorder of Coventry, 1772.
Died, 1778.



JAMES HEWITT, LORD LIFFORD,
Lord Chancellor of Ireland. Member for Coventry, 1761.
Died, 1789.



SAMUEL GREATHEED,
Member for Coventry, 1747.
Died, 1765.

The Oath of a Freeman sworn at this time is interesting. The name of Bright in the annexed is often found in Coventry during the eighteenth century a family which was connected, according to local tradition, with that of the late John Bright, Esq., M.P.

"CITY OF COVENTRY.

THE OATH OF A FREEMAN.

I, JACOB BRIGHT, Jordan Well Ward, Worsted and Plush Weaver, do sincerely promise and swear, that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to His Majesty King George, and that I will be obedient unto the Mayor and Magistrates of this City. The Lands, Liberties, Franchises, and Lawful Customs thereof I will maintain, and the same in all that I can or may lawfully defend, and keep harmless. I will be tributary to all Contributions, Taxes, Tallages, Summons, Watch, Scot and Lot, and all other charges to be laid within this City, bearing my part as any other Freeman shall or ought. I will defend the King's peace in that I may; and if I shall know of any gatherings or conspiracies moved or made against the King's peace, I will let the Mayor or Justices of this City know the same. I will not withhold or impair, nor conceal the withholding or impairing, any evidences or charters belonging to this City, but will warn the Mayor or Justices of this City of the same. I will not colorably bear, or seem to bear, or allow any Horse, Mare, Gelding, Colt, Filly, Cow, or Heifer, or other Cattle, of any other man's but of my own, upon any of the Commons of this City. All which points and articles I do swear well and truly to keep according to the laws of God and this realm and the lawful customs of this City. So help me God.

Admitted and Sworn in Council } The 18th Day of February, 1761.
a Citizen and Freeman }

J. HEWITT,
Mayor."

Parliament expired on the 20th March, 1761, and a new one met on the 19th May following. The King, immensely popular, desired not to meddle with the freedom of election, trusting rather to the people to strengthen the hands of the Government. Mr. Groves, through old age, and Mr. Greatheed, by reason of illness, declined to stand again for Coventry. The Corporation, however, secured Mr. James Hewitt as one of their candidates, and the Recorder found them a second one in his son, the Hon. Andrew Archer. The Tories, failing to secure a candidate, petitioned Mr. Groves to again fight their battle; he consented after great persuasion, and commenced to canvas. A song of the Whig party commences—

"Come cheer up, my lads, for your cause it is clear,
Be steady, and join hand in hand;
While true to your words, my brave boys, never fear,
A Hewitt and Archer—will stand."

The Sheriffs, Messrs. Porter and Langham, took the poll on the 25th and 26th of March, and on the last day Mr. Groves retired, when the numbers, as by the "list of the poll," printed under the Sheriffs direction by L. T. Luckman, near the Cross, ended as follows—

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----|-----|------|
| James Hewitt, Esq. ... | ... | ... | 1077 |
| The Hon. Andrew Archer. ... | ... | ... | 992 |
| William Groves, Esq. ... | ... | ... | 611 |

"This election was won," says the diary before quoted, "chiefly through the vigilance of Alderman Hewitt, who got together a great part of Mr. Groves friends before the poll began, and kept them drunk until it was over. Thus was the City deprived of a worthy gentleman who had served it in Parliament for twenty years with the greatest fidelity." The Sheriffs returned

JAMES HEWITT, ESQ., AND THE HON. ANDREW ARCHER.

Mr. James Hewitt was a native of Coventry, where he was born in 1709. As a lawyer he had assisted the Corporation with advice, and having attained eminence at the English Bar, was chosen a Sergeant-at-Law. He filled successively the offices of King's First Sergeant, and Judge of the Court of King's Bench, where he sat with Lord Mansfield (Chief Justice), Justices Eardley Wilmot, Willes, and other Judges of deep learning and independence of mind. In 1767 he was appointed Lord Chancellor of Ireland, and elevated to the Peerage of that kingdom 9th June, 1768, as Baron Lifford. His Lordship was advanced to a Viscounty, 4th January, 1781. He married twice: first, Miss Williams, daughter of the Rev. Rice Williams, D.D., Rector of Stapleford Abbot, Essex, by whom he had four sons and two daughters; by his second wife, Ambrosia, daughter of the Rev. Charles Bayley, of Knavestock, Essex, he had one son and two daughters. His motto was, "Be just, and fear not."

The Hon. Andrew Archer, then living at Umberslade, was, like his father, a staunch Whig. Soon after his election for Coventry, he married Sarah, eldest daughter of James West, Esq., President of the Royal Society, by whom he had four daughters. He succeeded to the title of Baron Archer on the death of his father in 1768, had considerable possessions in the County of Warwick, and was Lord of the Manor of Birmingham. It was at Lord Andrew Archer's house in Grosvenor Square, London, during 1767, that Prince Henry Frederick, Duke of Cumberland, met the unfortunate Olive, niece of King Poniatowski, of Poland, and where, on 4th March, their marriage was apparently privately celebrated.

The Chronicle in the second chapter tells of the toleration given to Dissenters, the proposing of a toast to "the memory of Oliver Cromwell" at a Council House dinner, the advice of the Recorder and Members, and the proceedings on Coronation day (22nd September), all of interest, as the perusal of the Chronicle will show, but need not be repeated here. Chapter five speaks freely as to the old and new methods of swearing in Freemen, and the Chronicle also records that the Whigs did not pay their publicans the debts incurred at the last election, which caused unpleasant consequences. The candidates left the matter to their Corporation supporters, who paid ten shillings in the pound to settle up, but the bill at the King's Head was not paid. The landlord of the Sun, hearing privately of the composition, made out his bill for double the quantity of liquor drawn, and the Chronicle shows how he got his full payment in an amusing fashion.

Coventry obtained several Acts of Parliament, chiefly through Mr. Hewitt's aid, the chief of which were "The Scavenger Act" and an Act to light and pave the streets, which helped to improve the City, in spite of the Chronicler's assertion that it was obtained to give the Corporation power. Before this time the streets were paved with "kidney stones," or pebbles, and had generally one gutter in the middle of the roadway, where, from the very indifferent drainage, great nuisances arose. The want of footways alongside the houses for pedestrians caused them to intermingle with the vehicular traffic, and accidents were frequent. Householders were called upon to repair that part of the street immediately before their holdings, and to clean the same each morning. In the evening their duty was to hang out, over their doors, a lantern with a lighted candle therein, to assist the public in passing. Wardens were chosen in every Ward to look after the City pumps, who collected money from the householders for their repairs, and for other matters. Under the new Act, Commissioners for management were appointed. Spon Bridge was built in 1767-8, and Spon Gate, on the circuit of the Town wall, removed in 1771.

Mr. Samuel Greatehead, late Member for Coventry, died 2nd August, 1765, aged 55, and was buried in a vault between the transepts of St. Mary's Church, Warwick. Many citizens of Coventry attended his funeral. There are two portraits of him at Guy's Cliff, one of which, a crayon drawing, is considered exceptionally good.

The King and his friends desired to break up the power of the Whigs. Pitt was driven from office in 1761, and his war policy reversed in 1763, but Bute's incompetence postponed a Tory triumph. The King submitted to Grenville for a time, but in July, 1765, preferred Rockingham and the Whigs, without Pitt; the Marquis going to the Treasury, and the Duke of Grafton and General Conway acting jointly as Secretaries of State, with Earl Hertford as Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland. In 1766, George influenced Grafton to resign, and Pitt, breaking from the Whigs, came to an understanding with His Majesty, and forming an administration, was created Earl of Chatham, Grafton went to the Treasury, Hertford to the Lord Chamberlainship, Mr. Willes became Solicitor-General, and Mr. James Hewitt a Judge of King's Bench. His preferment necessitated an election at Coventry, and whilst the Tories were unable to find a candidate, Mr. Justice Hewitt and the Corporation appealed to the Earl of Hertford, who sent his son, the Hon. Henry Seymour Conway. Party spirit ran high, although no contest occurred, and in some rioting a person named "Mantishold lost an eye, and one Wright was killed in a fight."

THE HON. HENRY SEYMOUR CONWAY

was elected on the 17th November, 1766.

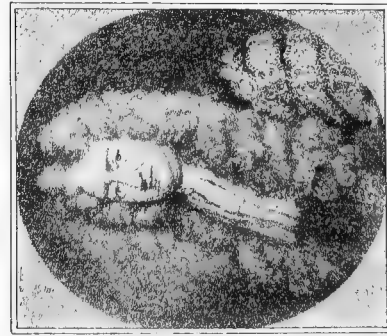
Mr. W. Groves, LL.D., some time M.P. for Coventry, died 1st May, 1767, at his Coventry residence in Cross Cheaping, aged 65. He was a Coroner of the County of Warwick, a Governor of the Hospitals of St. Bartholomew, Bridewell, and Bedlam.

One who knew him thus recorded his worth : " In politics, during his representation of Coventry, he was invariably steady in his fruitless endeavours for the defence of injured liberty, against the attacks of corrupt powers and the insults of triumphant oppression. In short, he was a compassionate benefactor, a kind master, a sincere friend, a kind parent, and an affectionate husband ; a useful subject, a true lover of his country, an honest man, and a good Christian."

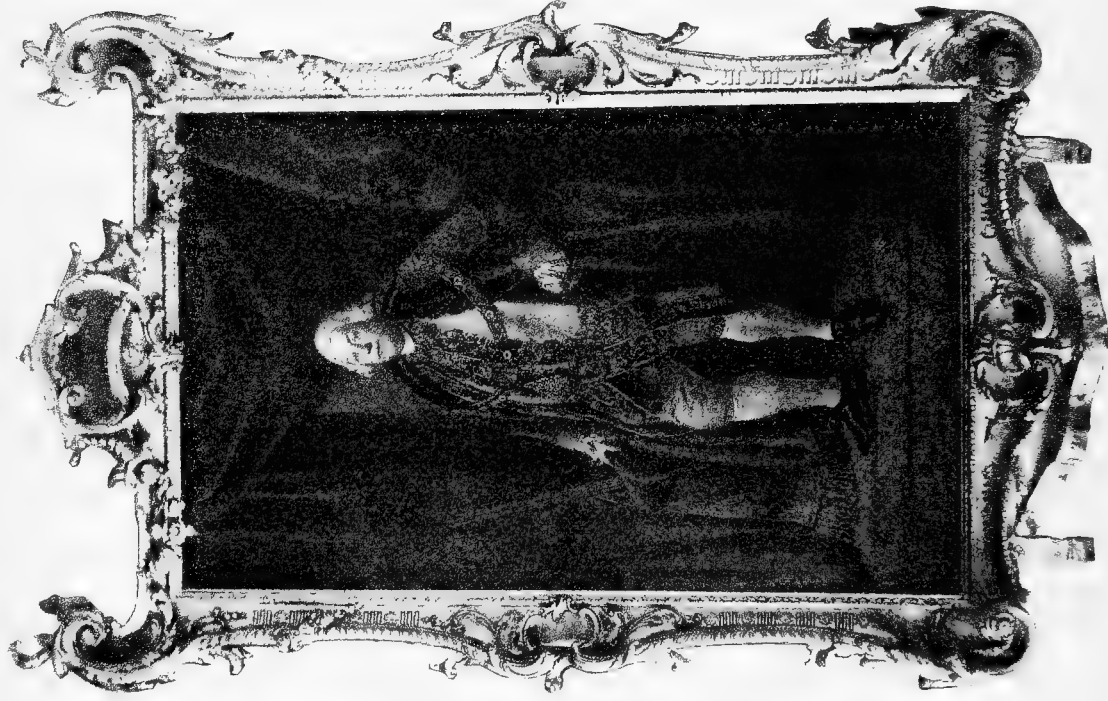
In March, 1767, Lord Chatham's health failed. There was want of unity in the Cabinet, and in December the Duke of Grafton re-modelled the Ministry.

Parliament passed a Bill, in 1768, entitled "An Act for making and maintaining a navigable canal from the City of Coventry to communicate upon Fradley Heath, in the County of Stafford, with a canal now making between the Rivers Trent and Mersey." The Coventry Canal (1768) had originally a hundred and thirteen subscribers, and its shareholders included Sir Roger Newdigate, Bart., of Arbury, Warwickshire, and Member for Oxford University, who aided in passing the measure. The Company commenced the work by an excavation at Foleshill Heath on the 25th of April, and on the 10th of August, 1769, two boat loads of coal were brought from the Bedworth pits to Coventry. By subsequent Acts, and additions to the work, the canal system was extended, and whilst Coventry had communication to Oxford in 1769-70, and Ashby-de-la-Zouch in 1794, Sir Roger Newdigate is stated to have boasted that he was able to go from Arbury to Italy by water. It was a fortunate speculation, for in 1825 some Coventry Canal shares (£100 each) were sold by auction in London for £1,230 per share, and before the railway panic set in, one reached £1,350.





THE RT HON WILLIAM BROMLEY.
Member for Oxford University.
Speaker of the House of Commons, 1710
Died, 1732.



SIR RICHARD GLYN, BART.,
Lord Mayor of London, 1758; Member for Coventry, 1768; Died, 1772.
(From a Painting by Zoffani, at Bridewell Hospital, London.)



SIR THOMAS HALLIFAX, KNIGHT.
Lord Mayor of London, 1776.
Parliamentary Candidate for Coventry, 1780-1.
Died, 1788.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

A GENERAL, AND A BYE, ELECTION.

George III., continued (1768 to 1774).

A general election—Messrs. Andrew Archer and Henry Seymour Conway for the Whigs—Tory interest deserted—Mr. Walter Waring, a Tory—Induced to stand at last moment—His canvass—Mrs. Waring's aid to her husband—Two days polling—Return of Messrs. Archer and Conway—The Corporation and the admission of Freemen—A case decided against them—Endeavours to gain the poorer voters—Ministerial changes—Death of Recorder, Thomas Lord Archer—Earl Hertford chosen—A bye-election—Mr. Thomas Nash for the Whigs and Corporation—Sir Richard Glyn, Bart., Independent and Tory—Retreat of Mr. Nash—Five days polling—Return of Sir Richard Glyn—His chairing—Biography of the new Member—Gifts to prisoners—Earl Hertford thrown out of Recordership—Lord Archer chosen—Gauze manufacture introduced—Lord Craven and the Mandamus Act—Death of Sir Richard Glyn—An election—Verses on the ex-Recorder—Mr. Waring returned unopposed—Account of him—The chairing song—The gaol rebuilt—Local Acts obtained.

PARLIAMENT dissolved on 11th March, 1768, and a new one was called for 10th May. The greatest efforts were everywhere made to gain votes, corruption was openly tried, and advertisements appeared in the public press offering premiums for seats. The Whig Members again came forward at Coventry to fight the Corporation's battle, but not expecting opposition, neglected to solicit the voters, for the old Blue, or Tory, interest had languished since the defeat of Mr. Groves; and although the "Independent" Freemen canvassed the Wards, soliciting various gentlemen to stand for them, none dared to do so, as the chances of success were remote whilst the Corporation held the power of admitting Freemen at will. Concluding re-election safe, the candidates left the Town two days before the poll commenced, to stay with Lord Warwick at his Castle, but hardly had they done so than a stranger to Coventry, Mr. Walter Waring—who had been unsuccessfully contesting Bishop's Castle against the Clive family interest—accompanied by his wife, came to stay at the Bull Inn, and in conversation with Mr. Pickering, the landlord, ascertained the state of political affairs in the City. The Tory innkeeper pressed him to become a candidate, gave him hopes of success, if not in this, at another, election; and Mr. Waring, taking his wife's advice, consented, was introduced to the chiefs of the party, and began to canvass, whilst "the other candidates were being toasted at Lord Warwick's table, as if already returned." Meanwhile, the Corporation party were in a fright; they hastily sent for Messrs. Archer and Conway to return, and started a

canvass. Mr. Waring, being late in the field, was not regularly supported by his party, but stood the poll for two days. The contest, as agreed, cost him little, and was really a test for future elections. During its progress, Mrs. Waring appeared at a window in Cross Cheaping, decked in blue and white ribbons, encouraging her husband's voters at the booth, but Mr. Waring declined further to contest, and on the 16th March the Sheriffs returned the

HON. ANDREW ARCHER, AND THE HON. HENRY SEYMOUR CONWAY.

Under the advice of Mr. Justice Hewitt, the Corporation admitted but very few persons, who had served their apprenticeships, to the freedom of the City. Mr. Waring promised the Blue Freemen to secure their rights and privileges for them, and to break up the objectionable tactics of the Corporation. Accordingly, in November, a *Mandamus* was served upon the Mayor, etc., to show why they refused to swear certain persons in as Freemen. The case was heard before Lord Mansfield and a special jury in the King's Bench Court, when verdicts and damages were obtained against the Corporation. The reception of the verdict was celebrated at Coventry by the ringing of bells and sheep roastings. Soon after several hundreds of young men, who had served their time, and remained unsworn, gained their freedom. The Corporation, desiring to retain favour with the Freemen, afterwards gave considerably more money in charity to the poorer voters than formerly, in order to secure their votes when an opportunity arose.

There were changes of administration at this period—changes aided by the King, in order to break up the influence of the great Whig families, who, since the time of William III., looked upon administrative offices as due to them, and at every new Ministry contended amongst themselves for places. In the Rockingham Ministry of 1765-6, the Duke of Grafton and General Conway, brother of Earl Hertford, were Secretaries of State, and the Earl himself Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland. Pitt, Earl of Chatham, broke with the Whigs, came to the King's rescue in 1766; but, through ill-health, had to resign. The Duke of Grafton continued the administration, General Conway resigned, and the Earl of Hertford for a time discontinued all connection with the Ministry. In January, 1770, Lord North came to the Treasury, and formed a Government, which for twelve years was swayed by the King's personal influence; General Conway became Master of the Ordinance.

The Recorder, Thomas Lord Archer, died at Pigou, in Essex, in 1768. The Council House chose Francis Seymour Conway, Earl of Hertford, a nobleman, who, as Lord Chesterfield writes, was "very much a gentleman in his behaviour to everybody." Born 28th July, 1719, he was created Viscount Beauchamp, and Earl of Hertford, in 1750, and became Lord-Lieutenant of Warwickshire in 1757. In 1763 he was Ambassador at Paris, three years after made Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, and afterwards Master of the Horse. He was Lord Chamberlain of the Household from 1766 to 1783, was Recorder of Thetford, and Steward for the Duchy of Cornwall, in Warwickshire; being

created Earl of Yarmouth, and Marquis of Hertford, in July, 1793. He married Lady Isabella Fitz-Roy, daughter of Charles, Duke of Grafton, by whom he had a numerous family; two of his sons were Members for Coventry. The Earl died 14th June, 1794.

The Hon. Andrew Archer being called to the House of Lords, an election took place in November to fill his seat in the Commons. As the Corporation interest was decaying, that body had considerable difficulty in finding a candidate. They unsuccessfully made appeals to Lords Grafton, Hertford, and Archer, but at the last moment Mr. Thomas Nash, a London linen-draper, came to their rescue. The Tories solicited Mr. Waring, but that gentleman, being unable to help them, brought down Sir Richard Glyn, the eminent banker, and late Lord Mayor of London, to champion their cause. On his arrival, he was met on the London Road by a vast concourse of people, to whom he made a speech, and the horses being taken out of his carriage, was drawn triumphantly into the City. The candidates addressed their friends. Alderman Glyn was aided by Mr. Waring, Mr. John Bird (another Alderman of London), and Mr. William Groves (son of the former Member), whilst Lady Glyn, who had accompanied her husband, "courageously visited every voter personally on his behalf."

The Whig candidate had agreed with the Corporation agents to spend a certain sum, and no more, but this was conditional upon his being nominated, and going to the poll, whereupon the Tories issued bills declaring—"No Corporation Slavery! No Nash!! No Two Thousand Pound Bargains!!! High Church—Glyn and Liberty! Now or never!" Mr. Nash found that the newly-admitted Freemen were against him, and left the City on Saturday evening before the election, with "his money in the hands of the Corporation." A booth had been erected, and the Whig gentlemen resolved to fulfil their agreement. They accordingly nominated their candidate in his absence, and kept the poll open for five days, but the contest closed on Tuesday at two o'clock, when the numbers stood—

| | | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----|-----|-----|------------|
| For Sir Richard Glyn (Tory) | ... | ... | ... | 925 |
| „ Mr. Thomas Nash (Whig) | ... | ... | ... | <u>512</u> |
| Majority for Glyn | ... | ... | ... | 413 |

and on 1st December the Sheriffs returned

SIR RICHARD GLYN, KNT. AND BART.

In returning thanks for his election from the steps of the Cross, the Member threatened the Corporation with a *Mandamus*, in order again to compel them to swear in many Freemen, whom they still refused. At the close of the poll, he was chaired amidst the wildest excitement, and carried shoulder-high through every street, attended by the different Companies streamers, music, ringing of bells, and applause of the multitude, whilst an ox was roasted in Cross Cheaping, and sheep in the Wards. Formerly, the

Members chairs were dressed with flowers and evergreens ; a new departure caused this to be altered, for "a very sumptuous chair was made, covered with white satin, ornamented with a canopy and a plume of feathers, decorated with blue and white ribbons." After the charring, Lady Glyn gave a ball in her husband's honour.

Sir Richard Glyn, Bart., the wealthy London banker, had filled the office of Lord Mayor in 1758. He was the only son of Robert Glyn, Esq., of Ewell, Surrey, and Anne Maynard, niece of Sir William Lewin, sometime Lord Mayor. His first wife was Susannah, only daughter of George Lewin, Esq., of Ewell, by whom he had three sons ; and his second, Elizabeth, daughter of Sir Richard Carr, of Northumberland, when he had two sons. The Baronet had considerable experience in elections, for in 1754 he contested the City of London, but, although it returned four members, was defeated, and fifth on the poll. In a cartoon of the period, entitled "The City Jockies," he is shown mounted upon a horse called "Little Driver," and a verse under says—

"Who flogs so hard, the third place to be in?
Oh, that is a Knight, Sir Richard Glyn,
And 'Little Driver,' too, will win."

In another cartoon, called "All the world in a hurry, or the road from London to Oxford, 1754," Sir Richard is represented, with other persons, on the way. His pace is slow, for a group of Jewish pedestrians block the way. The Knight, leaning out of his coach window, asks the postillion, "What the Devil, can't you get before the Jews, Tom?" "They are in possession of the road, Sir Richard," replies the groom. The Jews had lent Sir William Calvert their support, as he favoured their Naturalization Bill, and he and William Beckwith are shown between the group of Hebrew obstructives and Glyn's carriage, whilst the burly form of Sampson Gideon, the loan contractor (whose son was afterwards Member for Coventry), is seen, amidst his fellow co-religionists, wiping his perspiring forehead, exclaiming, "Verily, England is too hot at this time of the year," and "refuses to sweat a little" for Sir William. Glyn was returned for London in 1758 and in 1761, but was unsuccessful in 1768. He, however, obtained a seat for Coventry.

The Earl of Hertford and the Hon. Francis Seymour Conway sent Christmas presents to the prisoners confined in Coventry Gaol, which were duly acknowledged in the "Coventry Mercury" of January, 1769. The election of the Earl of Hertford as Recorder was soon after reversed by the Council House, and Andrew, Lord Archer, elected instead. His Lordship had, it appears, "procured places and pensions for several of their body," and their ingratitude gave offence to the Earl and his family. Lord Archer proved very acceptable, for he attended their feasts, and the Aldermen often visited his mansion at Umberslade.

About this time the gauze manufacture was started in Coventry. It had originally been carried on in London, and at Reading, from which last town a manufacturer had

induced thirty of the most skilled artizans to settle in Coventry, and immediately a great number of persons were taught by these weavers.

William, Lord Craven, interested himself considerably in the Coventry elections at this time. He was an amiable person, lavish in money matters, and popular with the Freemen generally, having aided greatly in obtaining an Act, 12 Geo. III., cap. 21, in 1771-2, for the more ready admission of Freemen to their freedom, with a view of putting down the late abuses, whereby any having served an apprenticeship, and giving written notice to the Mayor, etc., the Corporation were bound to admit him, or them, within one month of the service of the notice, in default of which, a *writ of Mandamus* from the King's Bench could be promptly issued, to compel the Mayor, etc., to grant the freedom, with costs, if the case went against them.

The death of Sir Richard Glyn occurred on 31st December, 1772, when his son, Sir Richard Carr Glyn, became a partner in Messrs. Hallifax, Mills, Glyn, and Mittons bank, various members of which had political connections with Coventry. Parties were unprepared, but Mr. Waring consented to contest for the Tories; the Whigs found no candidate. Lord Hertford was unpopular, and in a skit entitled, "A Hymn. To be sung by the Charity children of the Blue Coat School, on Sunday, 24th January, 1773, after a sermon to be preached in Holy Trinity Church," etc., curiously set to the popular tune of "Derry Down," there is this reference to his Lordship's amenities. It asks—

"What has become of Hertford's proud Earl,
Of Politeness the Pink, and of Peerage the Pearl?
The smooth, subtle Lord (who, like Vicar of Bray),
Whether George or James governs, will still be in pay.
Derry Down.

Why take the Juncto who made him Recorder,
And intend to bring us all under his Order?
So finely have spun their political thread,
That his name is detested, his influence fled.
Derry Down.

Then since, my good Lord, by experience you're taught,
That your interest's gone by the men you have bought,
Take your places again, and as sure as can be,
Matters soon will come round, and we all shall agree.
Derry Down."

No opposition was offered, and

MR. WALTER WARING

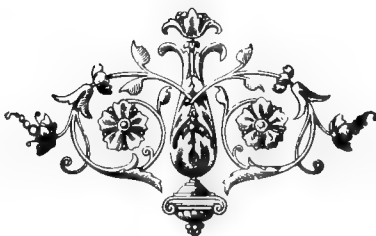
was elected on 25th January.

The family of Waring had been long settled at Owlbury, Salop, and Edmund Waring represented Bishop's Castle in the Parliaments of Charles II. Mr. Walter Waring was chosen for that Borough at a bye-election in January, 1755, but resigned, accepting the Stewardship of the Chiltern Hundreds in 1759. The Borough, with its

1,300 inhabitants, and 260 houses, had but about seventy voters, who were swayed, politically, by the Clive family; and at another bye-election in 1763, Mr. Waring found its interest too strong, and suffered defeat. He petitioned against the return of Mr. George Clive, but afterwards withdrew. He again suffered defeat in 1768, but the bold stand he afterwards made against the Corporation interest at Coventry, and his subsequent actions, had rendered him exceedingly popular with the younger, or "Independent" Freemen, and the "Chairing Song" adds—

"Here's a health to brave Waring, that good-natured soul,
Let's all drink his health in a full flowing bowl;
To the Church and the King we'll always stand true,
And let the world know we are honest True Blue.
For Waring's the man that with us will remain,
So let us be ready,
Steady, boys, steady,
To vote for brave Waring our freedom to gain."

The Gaol at Coventry was a wood and panelled building of the sixteenth century, dilapidated, small, and inconvenient. Powers were now obtained to build a new one, which was erected at this time. Acts were sought in 1774-5, to amend that of 9th George III., for making and maintaining a navigable canal from the Coventry Canal navigation to the City of Oxford, and for the widening of the road from Leicester to Coventry, Kenilworth, Warwick, and Halford Bridge; and from Coventry to Martyn's gutter, leading towards Stoneleigh.



CHAPTER XL.

THE WAR WITH THE AMERICAN COLONISTS: LADY CANVASSERS
AND PARTY COLOURS.

George III., continued (1774 to 1779).

The rebellious North-American Colonists—A new Parliament summoned—An election—Mr. Edward Roe Yeo introduced by Earl Craven—Joins Mr. Waring in the Independent interest—Corporation nominee, Mr. Thomas Green—Party distinction and colours—"True blue, Light blue"—Lady canvassers—Countess Craven and the election—Edward Roe Yeo and Walter Waring returned—The chairing and dinner—Lady Craven's gifts—Account of Mr. Yeo—War declared with Americans—Meetings and petitions for and against the war—Quarrel between Lord Craven and Mr. Yeo—War with France—The Vicar of Trinity's "poundage"—New Act for St. Michael's Parish—Death of Recorder, Andrew, Lord Archer—Augustus Henry Fitz-Roy, Duke of Grafton, chosen—Biography—On the road at election times.



THE North-American Colonists, objecting to British taxation, became rebellious, and on the 30th September, 1774, Parliament was dissolved, and a new one called for the 29th November. Lord Craven, who was popular at Coventry for obtaining the Mandamus Act, introduced his friend, Mr. Edward Roe Yeo, in the Independent interest, and Mr. Waring joined him. Lord Hertford, smarting under the affront he had received in 1769, would not allow Mr. Conway to again come forward for the Corporation party, and Lord Archer was unable to help them; but resolving upon opposition, they nominated "the Steward of their own Court, Councillor Green." The broad line of distinction in politics was as yet between the High party, who supported King and Constitution in Church and State, and the Low, who, with no hostility to King and Constitution, had the whole slang of civil and religious liberty tacked to their creed, with very little definite indication of what the phrase really meant. Locally, they were two bodies of men—"The Blues" on one side, and the Corporation party, who now had their cockades of green and yellow, on the other. Naturally, in a ribbon-producing constituency like Coventry, colours were greatly *en évidence*, and the following song, composed by Lady Craven, and entitled "True Blue, Light Blue," shows it—

"Since England was England I never yet knew,
A colour more lasting, more trusty than Blue;
Let Whigs boast their Green, and give Yellow its due,
But old England shall always rejoice in True Blue.

The Green is a changeable colour we know,
 As the course of the season most clearly does show;
 But Britons and Christians disdain to be seen,
 In a colour so transient, so fading as Green.

A lady her garter once dropped in a ring,
 The lovely 'True Blue' won the heart of a King;
 He gave it his Knights, but the Knights ne'er were seen,
 To fly from their colour, and skulk under Green.

Then boast of your Verdure, your Sweet Sonneteer,
 For an emblem of youth in the spring of the year;
 The earth a Green livery wears, it is true,
 But the heavens themselves are adorned with True Blue."

The introduction of lady canvassers at elections was well understood in Coventry, and whilst Mrs. Waring aided her husband, Lady Craven assisted Mr. Yeo. From the "Memoirs" of the latter (afterwards married to the Margrave of Anspach), Lady Craven says: "The people of Coventry took a great prepossession in my favour. In the visits that I paid I was obliged to pass through the City, and the people used to run by the side of the coach and say, 'God bless your sweet face!' and offer cakes, etc.," and adds that after a three days riot, a deputation came to Lord Craven "to entreat that I might go into the City with blue ribbons, as the yellows and greens had thrown it into confusion. I was much adverse to the proposition, but Lord Craven insisted, and I accordingly went in a low chaise, which generally was used in the Park. On my arrival at Coventry I was treated with the greatest respect by the people, so much was I beloved; and Lord Craven the next day named a friend of his."

The poll commenced on a Saturday, and lasted five days, but Mr. Green's efforts were feeble, for he "stood little chance, as he would not spend any money," and the polling ended—

| | | | |
|--------------------------|-----|-----|------|
| Edward Roe Yeo, Esq. ... | ... | ... | 1571 |
| Walter Waring, Esq. ... | ... | ... | 1111 |
| Thomas Green, Esq. ... | ... | ... | 827 |

and the Sheriffs, on the 8th of October, returned as elected,

MR. EDWARD ROE YEO AND MR. WALTER WARING.

There was a grand chairing, after which Lord Craven and the Members were entertained. The "Independent" interest were excessively jubilant, for it was upwards of sixty years since they had returned two of their party to the Commons, and the "next morning (being Sunday)," adds the Chronicle of Mr. John Jones, the "Right Honourable Lady Craven, imagining that many of the working Freemen, on account of the time they had lost in attending to the election, would be at fault how to provide for their families, very generously offered that every Freeman who voted for Mr. Yeo should be called upon with her Ladyship's compliments, and that a five shilling and threepenny ticket, should be given to everyone who would accept of it."

Mr. Yeo came of a Devonshire family, He resided at Normanton Turville, in

the County of Leicester, a property there, in 1647, coming by marriage to John Roe, and in 1737, by descent, to George Yeo.

Matters grew worse between this country and her American Colonists. England went to war, and in April the Whigs of London petitioned in favour of the Americans, and asked for the Ministers dismissal. Lord Grafton, being opposed to violent measures, resigned. The Coventry Tories held a meeting, they sent an address to the King recommending coercive measures, and promising their utmost support, which was presented by Mr. Yeo. The Whigs held an opposition meeting, and petitioned His Majesty to stop the war, and not to proceed against the Colonists; when, to the surprise of Mr. Yeo and the Tories, Lord Craven signed it; but the Member flatly refused to present the petition, and a quarrel ensued between them. So annoyed was Lord Craven, that he issued several humorous burlesque prints of the Member, and a paper war ensued; the Tories retaliating by representing Lord Craven in a cartoon dressed as a harlequin, in allusion to his changeable politics. The French acknowledged the Colonists independence, sent troops to their support, and in March, 1778, war was declared against them; subsequently Spain and Holland joined the Alliance against England.

Mr. John Jones Chronicle finishes in 1776, and in that year he tells us the Vicar of Trinity Parish had been three years at war to compel his parishioners to pay "poundage." The Act of 1558 for the payment of tithes in the City of Coventry remained unrepealed, and trouble arose also in St. Michael's, but in 1778 a new Act was granted for St. Michael's Parish.

Andrew, Lord Archer, Baron of Umberslade, died 25th of April, 1778, aged 41, and was buried in the Chancel of Tamworth Church in the family vault, where his lady erected a marble monument, on which her Ladyship, an exceedingly beautiful woman, is shown leaning upon her late Lord's tomb, his head being shown in profile on a medallion, which has considerable resemblance to the portrait at Umberslade. Sarah, Lady Archer, was a daughter of James West, of Alscote. They had no son, but three daughters, and the title ceased.

By the death of Lord Archer the Recordership of Coventry became vacant, and the Council elected Augustus Henry Fitz-Roy, Duke of Grafton, to the office, which he retained until his death in 1811. He was the grandson of the late Duke of Grafton, and was born on the 28th September, 1736. He received his education at Hackney Grammar School, and St. Peter's, Cambridge. In 1756 he married Anne, daughter of Lord Ravensworth, by whom he had three sons and one daughter. In 1769 his Grace was divorced from his wife under an Act of Parliament, and two months after married Elizabeth, daughter of Sir Richard Wrottesley, Bart., by whom he had thirteen children. He held many public appointments, but at the time of his election as Recorder of Coventry appears to have been out of office, but on Rockingham's again coming to power in 1782 he resumed the office of Privy Seal, and continued in such until 1783,

when he finally left the Cabinet. The Duke was a most persuasive speaker, his speeches being always delivered in the style of a scholar and gentleman. He was a strict observer of the decorum of debate and the dignity of the assembly in which he had the honour to sit. He had the greatest judgment in arranging the subject matter in his speeches, and was certainly one of the most able speakers of his day. His Grace was Ranger of Whittlebury Forest, His Majesty's gamekeeper at Newmarket, Receiver-General of the profits of the Seals in the King's Bench, and Common Pleas, and High Steward of Dartmouth. He was made Chancellor of the University of Cambridge in 1768, and in the next year elected a Knight of the Garter.

Members posting down to their constituents, unless they had a friend's house to call at, usually stayed at the party inns in the various towns on the way, which were often very costly and excessive in their charges, especially at election times, when mine host and his company, knowing the gentlemen of the Commons at a glance, usually let them in for a good round sum. If it happened that any of the candidate's friendly electors were at the inn, they had especially to be looked to. The hosts on the main roads were often important persons, and sometimes the honourable gentleman, or his agent, left with them a sum to be expended in refreshing voters who should arrive by coach, to be laid out at the landlord's discretion. By those on the coach from London to Coventry, whilst changing horses, a "refresher" was needed, especially on a cold morning, and the success of the candidate, and the cause he represented, had to be drank, as a matter of course, at dinner, etc., whilst the necessary was somehow found to provide it. If voters were not well looked after, they often from pique went over to their opponents, as at a Northampton election, where the electors, having drank up all the choice port of one noble lord who kept open house, he placed claret before them, when they all left in a body, declaring they would never vote for a man who gave them *sour port*, and so went over to the enemy. Generally, if coming from London, they had a ticket, or money, from the London Committee for the down and return journeys, but occasionally other expedients were resorted to. Postal arrangements were very imperfect, and if a Member happened to be in Cornwall on the dissolution of Parliament, it took eleven days for a letter sent from Coventry to acquaint him of the fact, and if the state of the roads and the weather were bad, he might find it impossible to reach the City before the election had commenced. To obtain a reply letter from London in answer to one sent from Coventry, five days were necessary in the ordinary course of events, but there were special express rates which brought merchants into nearer communication, but the expenses were considerable, for a letter, or packet, sent "urgent" at any hour of the day, or night, from the General Post Office at London for Coventry, cost £1 19s. 1d by this rate, such missives being sent by special post horses and relays, taken from those kept in readiness at the various inns or stations *en route*.



Hertford

FRANCIS SEYMOUR CONWAY, EARL OF HERTFORD, K.G.,
Recorder of Corentry, 1765
Died, 1794



Grafton

AUGUSTUS HENRY FITZ-ROY, DUKE OF GRAFTON, K.G.,
Recorder of Corentry, 1778.
Died, 1811



JOHN BAKER HOLROYD, LORD SHEFFIELD.
Member for Corentry, 1780.
Died, 1821.



ELIZABETH, LADY CRAVEN
(Afterwards Margravine of Anspach).
Died, 1828.

CHAPTER XLI.

AN EXCITING CONTEST, WITH NO MEMBERS RETURNED.

George III., continued (1780).

Death of Mr. Waring—Attorney-General recommends Colonel Holroyd—The historian Gibbon and his advice—Introducing the Colonel—John Baker Holroyd, Esq., chosen—His biography—The Colonel and the Gordon Riots—Roman Catholic controversy—Preparing for a general election—"O Baal, hear us!"—Candidates: Messrs. Yeo and Holroyd, and Messrs. Hallifax and Rogers—"Baal's answer"—A Blue effusion, "Rise, patriotic Sons of Freedom, rise!"—Bills of the election—Selling the Members—Commencement of the poll—The Blue mob take the booth—Polling discontinued—Continued next day—The dodges of the Yellows thwarted—Proposition of the Sheriffs—Sunday preparations—Hired colliers and constables of Corporation—The Blues occupy the booth all night—Attack of the Yellows thereon—Repulsed—First bludgeon fight—Windows destroyed at St. Mary's Hall—Sheriffs close the poll—Petitions to the House—Sheriffs certify their inability to make a return.



MR. WARING died in January, 1780, when the Blue party, and Draper's Company, desired Government to find them a candidate; and Wedderburn, the Attorney-General, sent express to Colonel Holroyd, an officer commanding at Coventry, who immediately offered himself. The historian, Edward Gibbon, wrote from London to his friend the Colonel, on the 7th of February, desiring to see him with them in Parliament, but warning him against making promises for the ensuing general election, "which might end in defeat, or a £10,000 contest," adding that "in this vacancy the celerity of your notions will present opposition, but at the general election your enemy, the Corporation, will not be asleep."

An opposition handbill thus records Colonel Holroyd's introduction:—

"At a meeting of the Freemen of the City of Coventry, on Saturday, the 5th of February, in order to nominate a proper person to succeed their late representative, the following speech was made by an eminent tavern keeper: 'Gem'men, there's a gem'man, I believe a very clever gem'man, his name is, let me see, I forget, but however, he is Colonel of this here new-raised regiment, I mean this regiment that is now in this here Town; he is a man of character and fortune, and comes recommended by Mr. What-d'ye-call-'im, the Solicitor-General. Gem'men, you must all know so great a man as the Solicitor-General, and what he can do for you, so I put the Colonel under your care and protection.' The reason of the tavern keeper's leaving off so abruptly is said to have been occasioned by his first-born desiring his papa to sit down, and let a gentleman of greater abilities recommend the Colonel."

No opposition was forthcoming, and on the 15th

JOHN BAKER HOLROYD, ESQ.,
was returned.

The Colonel was the son of Isaac Holroyd, and his wife Dorothy Baker, of Penn, Bucks, and was born in Ireland in 1735. Subsequently inheriting his mother's estates, he took her name. He saw service under the Marquis of Granby, and in 1778 became a Major in the Sussex Militia. When the French and Spanish fleets were on the English coast, he raised, with the King's approval, a regiment of Light Dragoons, without expense to the public, and they came to Coventry for training. In the House on the 5th of April, 1780, he stoutly denied that he had raised the regiment for other than patriotic movements. Colonel Holroyd married Abigail, daughter of Lewis Way, of Richmond, Surrey, by whom he had three children. After this lady's death in 1793, he married Lady Lucy Pelham (third daughter of Thomas, Earl of Chichester), who died in 1797, without issue. He then married Lady Anne North, second daughter of Frederick, Earl of Guildford, the distinguished Minister of George III., by whom he had two children.

On the 2nd June, 1780, the Gordon rioters marched to the House of Commons, raising the cry of "No Popery." They took possession of the lobby, and demanded admittance, whereupon Lord George Gordon proposed the immediate consideration of their petition, and leaving the House, harangued, and encouraged the mob to persevere. On returning to the House, the agitator was seized by Colonel Holroyd, who told him that if he dared go out again he would move his commitment to Newgate. The Colonel afterwards led the first troops into London to repress the rioters, on their breaking into Langdale's distillery at Holborn, and setting it on fire. Meanwhile, a bitter controversy was raging at Coventry about Roman Catholic toleration. Bills were circulated impugning the allegiance of the Catholics, and declaring oaths taken by them to be of no value.

From July to September repeated appeals were issued to the Freemen desiring them not to promise their votes, as "two gentlemen of independent fortune" would shortly offer themselves in the Corporation interest. Their names were not disclosed, and the Tories retorted that the said two gentlemen "must be either asleep or on a journey, as the Corporation had been crying, 'O Baal, hear us!' for months, and yet there was no voice nor any that answered." The tranquillity of the Town was disturbed in September by a general election, and scarcely had the addresses of Messrs. Yeo and Holroyd been issued, than two eminent London bankers, Sir Thomas Hallifax and Thomas Rogers, Esq., were announced as the Corporation candidates, and "Baal's answer" followed. Both sides commenced to canvass, as usual, a brisk paper warfare was carried on, and the following Tory poetic effusion appeared :—

"Ye favourites of the tuneful sisters nine,
Come give the muse your aid, and with me join
In praise of men who to their King are true—
In praise of Holroyd, Yeo, and loyal blue.
In praise of blue let every virgin fair
With heavenly blue adorn her auburn hair.

Blue be the string that ties her snowy neck,
 Blue be her veil, without one single speck ;
 Blue be the favour that adorns her breast,
 Blue be her head-dress when she goes to rest ;
 Blue be the shoes that bind her pretty feet,
 Blue be the china when my fair doth treat ;
 Blue be the colour of her rapid car,
 And blue the livery that her servants wear.
 All things be blue in honour of the cause,
 To Yeo and Holroyd tune your just applause."

The Whigs meanwhile issued the following :—

"Rise, patriotic Sons of Freedom, rise,
 And let your acclamations rend the skies ;
 Your fav'rite standard's waving in the air,
 High rear your streamers, and your votes prepare.

Here comes two candidates, deservedly great,
 No Ministerial vanes, nor tools of State,
 Who barter public good for private ends,
 But patriot souls and liberty's true friends.

Unite with hearts and voices one and all ;
 Let Tories tremble lest their colours fall.
 'Shew us your men!' they've said ; perhaps they'll see
 Our men too many for their men may be.

Holroyd already fears his overthrow,
 And Tories tremble for the fate of *Yeo* ;
 Come now, and boldly for your freedom stand,
 One turning voice may save a sinking land.

Let Freedom now resume her native seat,
 And smile in triumph o'er the basely great ;
 Our loyal hearts shall beat, our tongues shall sing,
 God mend the Ministry, and save the King."

A series of "sketches from nature" followed, and lampoons, under the heading of "Auctions," show to what extreme indignity candidates at the time were put to by malicious opponents. "An Auction at the Auction Room in the Women's Market Place" thus records the selling of Sir Thomas Hallifax :—

"LOT 1.—AUCTIONEER: 'Behold, here is a man of most profound abilities and Penetration, deeply skilled in all Sciences, and is particularly distinguished in the Annals of Chivalry. He has one peculiar Property belonging to him, which is the Art of keeping his wife alive for the space of six or seven Days without any Manner of Nourishment ; he shall make Bargains, sell his Conscience, and break his Word with any Man in all the King's Dominions. What shall we say for him ?'—LADY: 'Fourteen Shillings!'—AUCTIONEER: 'Why, Madam, if Knights were as plentiful as *Bankrupts*, Sir Thomas should not go at that Price.'—GENTLEMAN: 'A Shilling more.'—AUCTIONEER: 'Thank you, Sir, he is yours ; and you may take my Word for it, he will teach you how to pay all your Debts after the rate of Fifteen Shillings in the Pound, and yet have a Qualification left to enable you to offer yourself as a Candidate to represent a City in Parliament.'"

"The Particulars of a late Auction" professes to give the sale of the Tory candidates, and says :—

"LOT 1. C-1-1 H-lr-d.—AUCTIONEER: 'Ladies and Gentlemen, this Lot is perhaps the most curious that ever was exposed to public auction. The wonderful Qualifications possessed by this man are beyond the power of Oratory or Elocution to set forth. The whole creation can't produce such another Being. He sprang from the Bogs of *Hibernia*, and though detested in the Place of his Nativity, is the completest Master of Adulation in the Universe. The power of Oratory he possesses in an eminent Degree, with the addition of a most retentive Memory. Attend to every speech he makes, and you will find the same verbatim. I should enlarge greatly upon his Virtues, but he carries all he possesses in his Face, and says all he knows in one Speech. Show yourself, C-1-1! . . . Bid, if you please, I cannot dwell upon him. He must go, if no advance. Shameful indeed! An *Hibernian* Hero! a *Sussex* Wight! a real Bragadocio, going for the low Price of one Halfpenny—and only one Bidder! A-going! going! gone!'"

"LOT 2. E. R. Y-o.—AUCTIONEER: 'Come, Ladies and Gentlemen, here's a lot that I hope will tempt you, and fetch a better price than the last. This figure is a *Leicestershire* Hero; as sleek as an Italian Greyhound, and equally harmless. View him from Head to Foot; see how beautiful he is made. He's not overburdened with Flesh, but fit for *anything*. I shall put him up at the same price as the last, and have no doubt but that you will bid me more. A Farthing for this beautiful Creature!'—PLAIN ENGLISH WHIG: 'He's got the Mange; see how yellow his Eyes are!'—AUCTIONEER: 'Sir, I am astonished at your Insolence; nothing will please you, it seems. He has had the Mange, to be sure, but *is now perfectly cured*. Besides, he's worth more than is bid, even for a Skeleton. . . . Well, he must go if no advance; I can't stand all Night over a Bag of Bones. A-going once, twice; the third and last Time, a-going—gone!'"

The poll commenced on Saturday, 9th of September, and it at once became apparent that the Corporation had resolved to carry its candidates at all hazards, in order to secure the representation into its own hands. The poll booth was situate in Cross Cheaping, before the Mayor's Parlour, and the Peacock Inn. The former was used for Magisterial proceedings, and formed a *rendezvous* of the Corporation party during the election, its nearness to the booth recommending it, whilst a private way into the Peacock Inn proved exceedingly useful for the designs of that body. The poll opened quietly, but half-an-hour afterwards the Blue Freemen, 500 strong, marched to the booth, carrying a large blue flag before them, and driving the Yellows away, took possession. At the end appointed for recording the votes for Holroyd and Yeo, the poll was now discontinued, and the Sheriffs gave no other excuse than that the poll clerk was obliged to leave on private business, but no one else was appointed. The poll closed at one o'clock, when twenty-three votes had been recorded for Yeo and Holroyd, and four for Hallifax and Rogers. When it was resumed on Monday, the tactics of the Yellow party to facilitate the polling of their friends, and of obstructing their opponents, were apparent. The end of the booth where Hallifax and Rogers Freemen were to record their votes had been contrived to communicate directly with the Peacock Inn and Mayor's Parlour, whilst the other end, for the voters of Yeo and Holroyd, was approached by dangerous steps, up which the Tories had to go to poll. At the Corporation "end, a young gentleman was placed as poll clerk, who rolled over the Oaths with the quickness of a schoolboy, whilst at the other was a toothless old man, who, with the aid of a pair of spectacles, could scarcely see, and took as much time to swear one Freeman as the other did five." By this contrivance they hoped to obtain a temporary majority and provoke an outbreak, by which they could form a

pretext for prematurely closing the poll when in their favour. The Corporation had further obtained the assistance of several hundred colliers, roughs, and prize-fighters as constables, "to preserve the peace." The second day's poll closed with thirty-four for Holroyd and Yeo, and twenty-one for Hallifax and Rogers.

On the 16th, the Sheriffs required that the voters should have access to the booth, and promised that then the Freemen would be polled one by one alternately. On the 17th, being Sunday, the Corporation party received an addition of many colliers and others, whom they assembled and armed with staves at St. Mary's Hall, when private instructions were given that the booth should be secured at all risks on Monday morning, and held for at least half-an-hour, during which time as many of the Yellow Freemen should be polled as would give Hallifax and Rogers a clear majority, which being obtained, the Sheriffs would then formally close the poll upon pretext of a riot. Yeo and Holroyd made proposals to have the poll carried on fairly and impartially, but this was not listened to, and during the evening a number of the Blues took possession of the booth, and slept there, in anticipation of the morrow's *melee*.

On the 18th, the Yellows made their attack upon the booth through the Peacock gateway, whilst an Alderman led a force of armed partizans and constables from the Mayor's Parlour. They used their staves freely, but their opponents were prepared for the attack, and rushed upon their assailants, when a most desperate encounter, known as "the first bludgeon fight," ensued. Great personal and other damage was done, but in the end the Yellows were driven back, and many disarmed, whilst the Chief Constable lost his staff, and was trodden under foot. The Blues chased some of the colliers to St. Mary's Hall, where stone-throwing commenced, and a considerable quantity of the old and valuable glass of the windows was destroyed. Their scheme having entirely failed, the Sheriffs hastily closed their books, and the poll ended. During the eight days only ninety-six Freemen were polled, of whom sixty-five were for Holroyd and Yeo, and between two and three thousand voters remained unpolled.

The Tory candidates petitioned the House complaining of the Sheriffs conduct, and 1,192 Freemen signed a declaration that they were ready to poll for Holroyd and Yeo, but were unable to get their votes taken. Hallifax and Rogers petitioned that the poll, through tumultuous proceedings, had been obstructed, whilst the Sheriffs certified that through riots they were unable to proceed to the election of Members.

CHAPTER XLII.

THE SHERIFFS SUMMONED TO THE HOUSE: A SECOND ELECTION,
AND AN ILLEGAL RETURN.

George III., continued (1780 to 1781).

Lord North's increased majority—A new writ for Coventry—Sheriffs Noxon and Butler sent for—New Sheriffs—Candidates as before—Corporation constables—Lord Craven's tenants—Promises—Poll opens—"The greater bludgeon fight"—Victory of the Blues—Result of first day—Second day—Agreement as to polling—Delays—Result of Saturday's poll—Corporation in want of voters—Swear in "Mushroom" Freemen—Colonel Holroyd made an Irish Peer—"The Old Blue Club"—Protest of Sheffield and Yeo—Proposal for a double return—Refused by the Yellows—Tally voting stayed—Violence—"The Mushrooms" polled—Riot Act read—Final declaration of the poll—Sir Thomas Hallifax and Mr. Thomas Rogers returned—Opposition statement—Biographies of the Members.

THE majority of Ministers had increased with the elections, and when Parliament met, Lord Beauchamp moved for a new writ for Coventry, which, although Mr. Fox suggested delay, was carried. The Sheriffs, Noxon and Butler, were summoned to the House for their improper return, and the messenger of the Commons served notices upon them on 9th November. In the meantime the Coventry Council House had chosen Messrs. Wilcox and Howlette, two equally extreme partizans, to succeed them in the office.

The same candidates as before issued addresses, and the poll was fixed to open on 29th. The Corporation engaged many constables, and hired "ruffians and prize-fighters from Atherstone, Bedworth, Birmingham, and elsewhere, together with numbers of Lord Craven's tenants and labourers," and swore them in privately at Stoke; but "notwithstanding this secrecy, the Blues were apprised of it, and determined to die or defend their freedom." The Mayor refused to swear in persons who had served their time, and needy Freemen were promised gifts for their votes by the Corporation party, but a Tory rhymster adds—

"Their Charities now will but little avail,
Because if they use them they know they must fail,
A diff'rence well known to all honest fellows,
For Charities long have supported the Yellows."

The Blue Freemen surrounded the booth whilst the preliminaries were proceeding on the 29th, but the armed men and constables of the Corporation came up "six a breast" from the Women's Market, "where they had been fed by the gentlemen of the Yellow party." They were provided with heavy poles six feet, and staves two feet, long; mounted with iron knobs, and painted with the Corporation coat of arms; and ash bludgeons. "Thus armed, they placed the new constables before their iron constables, with their Freemen behind, and marched to the Cross Cheaping end of the Peacock gateway. They called to the Blues to quit the booth; they refused to do so unless polled first; those in front began to use force, and when a Blue seized a countryman's staff, retaliation commenced." The Yellows endeavoured to seize the booth; a hand-to-hand encounter ensued—a desperate conflict of desperate men—afterwards known as "the greater bludgeon fight," from which many broken heads and bones told their tale for years to come. Some of "the Cravens" had been reluctantly pressed into service, and now dropped their staves in token of submission. This caused a panic amongst the Yellows, who fled back under the archway, where, jammed closely together, they could hardly move, and to complete their discomfiture, a number of stones were thrown in their midst. A retreat commenced; many were chased into West Orchard, where they hid in the river, under the arches of the bridge, until they could leave safely. The polling had commenced at one o'clock, and closed at three. Thirty-eight votes were recorded for Holroyd and Yeo, and nineteen for Hallifax and Rogers.

The Blues kept a watch at the booth night after night, and Holroyd and Yeo protested against the Corporation's armed non-voters. On the 30th the poll did not commence until noon, and at the adjournment Holroyd and Yeo had polled a majority of 150 voters. The candidates met at the booth on the 1st December, and an agreement was come to, whereby Messrs. Holroyd and Yeo were to poll Freemen enough to keep their majority of 150, "they consenting that twelve shall be polled for Sir Thomas Hallifax and Mr. Rogers each day till that majority is obtained," and that afterwards one should be polled for each "set of candidates alternately, man to man," until one side's Freemen were exhausted, and the poll close. It was arranged that the voters should be brought up to the poll through a lane, or space, with the Yellow Freemen on one side, and the Blue on the other.

The Corporation saw with dismay that they would lose the election unless some further extraordinary measures were taken. They subjected their opponent's votes to the severest scrutiny, and prolonged the poll to tire out Holroyd and Yeo with trouble and expense, yet the numbers on Saturday evening, the 9th, were against them, being—for Holroyd 770, Yeo 769, Hallifax 620, and Rogers 619. A scheme, the development of which took time, soon began to show itself. The Corporation determined to return their men, and hit upon the dangerous expedient of choosing, and swearing in, persons of their own nomination; upon whom they could rely to vote for Hallifax and Rogers;

who had not served apprenticeships in the City, or paid fees for admission, and enrolment, and had no more right to the freedom than the man in the moon. At a Council House meeting on the 20th, Thomas Pickin (Mayor) presiding, sixty-six of these persons were surreptitiously sworn in as Freemen. Some of them were entire strangers to the City, and had to ask the way to the Mayor's Court at St. Mary's Hall. A handbill, headed "Mushrooms, take care!" gives a list of one hundred and fifty names, with the trades, of those sworn on the 18th and 20th. Amongst them were silk weavers from Mile End, London, cord-wainers from Cripplegate, weavers from Oxford, soldiers serving in the Portsmouth Marines, Derbyshire Militia, and Coldstream Guards, with residents at Leicester, Macclesfield, Bedworth, Tamworth, and other places. There were also from forty to fifty sworn immediately before the poll closed.

The King signified his intention of conferring an Irish Peerage upon Colonel Holroyd, who was advanced to that Peerage, under the title of Baron Sheffield, on the 9th January, 1781.

"The old Blue Club" issued notices respecting the "Mushroom voters of a night's growth," asking all friends of the Freemen who were acquainted with defects in their title to give evidence respecting them. The Blues protested against the wholesale making of Freemen, and for several days would not let them poll. By this time, however, it had become well understood that the Corporation had determined to admit, and swear in, these "Mushrooms" until they had a majority. It was bad weather, and Sheffield and Yeo, weary of the delay, were anxious to close the election. They thereupon proposed that a double return should be made, relying upon having a majority of genuine Freemen sworn in before the election; but the other candidates, who claimed their majority by these illegal voters, would not consent to leave the matter to be settled by the House of Commons, whereupon Yeo and Holroyd refused any longer to proceed upon the principle of "tally" voting. The Corporation persisted in polling the spurious voters, and the Freemen, in opposition, resisted by force the armed bodies of the Corporation, introduced to protect the "Mushrooms." Terrible violence ensued, the Sheriffs counsel read the Riot Act, and the polling ended. The Sheriffs declared the poll to be as follows:—

| | | | | | | |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|
| Sir Thomas Hallifax, Kt. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1319 |
| Thomas Rogers, Esq. ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1318 |
| Edward Roe Yeo, Esq. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1298 |
| Lord Sheffield... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1295 |
| <hr/> | | | | | | |
| Majority for Sir Thomas Hallifax | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 21 |
| " " Mr. Rogers | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 20 |
| <hr/> | | | | | | |
| Total number polled ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2618 |
| Sworn Freemen tendered for Sir Thomas Hallifax and Mr. Rogers | | | | | | 55 |
| Unsworn Freemen tendered for same | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 16 |
| <hr/> | | | | | | |
| Total | | | | | ... | 71 |
| <hr/> | | | | | | |
| Unsworn Freemen tendered for Messrs. Yeo and Sheffield | | | | | ... | 62 |

The Sheriffs returned

SIR THOMAS HALLIFAX, KT., AND THOMAS ROGERS, ESQ.

The Tories insisted, however, that the genuine state of the poll was as follows:—

| | | | | |
|------------|-----|-----|-----|------|
| Yeo ... | ... | ... | ... | 1238 |
| Sheffield | ... | ... | ... | 1235 |
| Hallifax | ... | ... | ... | 1081 |
| Rogers ... | ... | ... | ... | 1079 |

thus giving Yeo a majority of 157, and Sheffield a majority of 154.

Sir Thomas Hallifax was a rich banker, and a member of the firm of Hallifax, Mills, Glyn, Mills, and Mitton, of 18, Birchen Lane, London. He was the son of John Hallifax, a clock maker, of Barnsley, and served his apprenticeship to a grocer of that town. He went to London, and successively became a silversmith and a banker. In 1753, he entered as a partner in the before-named bank, became free of the City, and a member of the Goldsmiths Company by redemption. In 1766, he was elected Alderman of Aldgate, and received Knighthood for the part he took in receiving the Danish King. When Wilkes was elected for Middlesex in 1769, Hallifax was Returning Officer, and stoutly maintained the right of free election. He afterwards joined the Court party, had been introduced at Coventry as Sir Richard Glyn's friend, and a bill of this year says:—

"Tho' Rogers and Hallifax now are their glory,
Be the first what he will, the last was a Tory."

Sir Thomas was chosen Lord Mayor in 1776, and as the Wilkes agitation had ended, he invited the Ministers, after seven years absence, to his Mayoral feast. He resided at Gordon House, Enfield. His portrait is at Chadacre Hall, Suffolk, and he is represented in Miller's painting of the swearing-in of Alderman Newnham as Lord Mayor, 1782. The Knight married, in 1762, Penelope, daughter of Richard Thompson, Esq., of Lincoln's Inn, who brought him £20,000, but died the next year, when he married Margaret, daughter of John Saville, of Enfield. She died in November, 1777, leaving two children, and Sir Thomas (who was buried in Enfield Church), 7th February, 1789, when he left a fortune of £100,000.

Mr. Thomas Rogers was a member of the banking firm of Welch, Rogers, and Olding, 80, Cornhill, and resided at Newington. Originally a Churchman, after his marriage he joined the Presbyterian, or Unitarian, Church, upon which subject a handbill of this date adds: "Mr. Rogers, in time past, paid his addresses to a lady of great fortune, and she refused to give him her hand unless he would leave the Church of England, in which he was educated, and go to Meeting with her. The *Saint* gave in to the proposal without hesitation." He was reported to be "immensely wealthy, and the possessor of a £1,000 Bank of England note." His son was the well-known Samuel Rogers, the poet. Hallifax and Rogers were dubbed, in the Coventry election squibs, "The Dumb Knight and the Dismal Squire," in allusion to their oratorical powers.

CHAPTER XLIII.

"PLUCKING THE MUSHROOMS." THE SHERIFFS SENT TO NEWGATE.

George III., continued (1781).

Sheffield and Yeo's petition—Address of Hallifax and Rogers—Grenville's Act—Lord Beauchamp's motion—Opposed by Charles Fox—Hallifax suggests delay—Sheriffs called to the Bar—Their justification read—Yeo and Sheffield's petition considered—The evidence—Hallifax and Rogers at length decline to contest it—Committee's decisions—"Plucking the Mushrooms"—True state of the poll—Hallifax and Rogers unseated—Return amended—Yeo and Sheffield declared elected—Committee's report—Special Bill to be prepared—The Sheriff's trial—Resolutions thereon—Noxon and Butler sent to Newgate—Their wretched condition—Intercession—Removed into custody of Sergeant-at-Arms—Report of the "*Coventry Mercury*"—Further intercession over-ruled—Lord Sheffield presents petition—Sheriffs reprimanded by the Speaker—Released—After account of Hallifax and Rogers—Charles Fox and the *Coventry Blues*—The chairing—Extracts from songs—Tory feasting at the White Bear Inn—Corporation supporters dinner.



WRITER had declared that "the end of the election would clear away the mist," and his prediction was soon realized, for the proceedings of "those 'tried friends of Liberty, the Corporation,' whose characters are beyond reproach," were about to have their deeds exposed to the public gaze. Yeo and Sheffield petitioned against the Sheriffs return on the 5th January, and the same day Hallifax and Rogers issued an address, stating their confidence in a tribunal, constructed under Grenville's Act of 1770, for trying the case, and assuring the Freemen that not only would the majority be found a legal one, but increased on a scrutiny.

On the 23rd, Viscount Beauchamp moved in the House for a Committee of Enquiry, which, although stoutly opposed by Mr. Fox, was carried by 109 votes to 85. On the 31st, a motion was made for the Sheriffs to attend at the Bar, when Sir Thomas Hallifax proposed to defer the matter until there was a fuller House. The Sheriffs were, however, called in, and their reasons for not making a proper return read. They acknowledged, in reply to the Speaker, it was their own; and prayed to be heard by counsel, desiring that their daily proceedings during the election might also be considered. Mr. Fox moved that the prisoners legal advisers should be heard, which being agreed to, the Sheriffs and counsel for both sides were called in, made acquainted with the resolution, and the business deferred for a time.

On 7th of February the House considered Sheffield and Yeo's petition, and the various counsel were heard. The evidence given was voluminous, exposing things as

described. It was shown that the election booth (which was about fifteen yards long, and half that in depth) had been erected against a room called the Mayor's Parlour, so situate by means of other buildings that the front was open and convenient for polling, as was one end called the "pump end," whilst the other was very inconvenient, and had to be ascended by a dangerous ladder. The Freemen desired to poll at the front, as beforetime, but the Sheriffs positively refused this, and put up painted boards at the ends, intimating that the "pump end" was for Hallifax and Rogers, and the ladder end for Sheffield and Yeo. On the first day very few votes were polled, whereupon the Sheriffs broke up the business without any reasonable cause; whilst on the second day, the Freemen, being six or seven deep at the front of the booth, had refused to depart until the Sheriffs received their poll anywhere but at the two ends. The polling was totally obstructed, and after many days confusion, the Sheriffs declared it closed. A number of witnesses attended to support the charges against the Sheriffs. Mr. William Groves said that the conduct of the Freemen was never more peaceable, but that the Sheriffs refused to take the votes for Sheffield and Yeo, as the Freemen of Hallifax and Rogers were not up to the poll booth. Mr. W. Wilberforce Bird added that the Sheriffs often retired with the Corporation candidates into the Mayor's Parlour. Messrs. Chambers, Lilley, and Troughton deposed to the grossly unfair conduct of the Sheriffs and Corporation, to the needless delays and unjustifiable closing of the poll, and stated that upon the last day the booth was suddenly crowded by men from the Mayor's Parlour, at which the Blue Freemen were irritated; one man jumped over, and was hauled by the hair of his head into the Parlour by the retreating constables, and great confusion ensued. Mr. Lilley added that he then saw a man named Horton, with a sword in his hand, leading the music and the Corporation mob. The defence of the Sheriffs and the sitting Members was heard, and on the 25th it was resolved—

"That it is the opinion of this Committee that the 83 Freemen admitted on Monday, the 18th day of December, 1780, and the seventeenth day of polling, be struck off the poll;" and

"That it is the opinion of this Committee that the 66 persons admitted to be put on the roll as Freemen on Wednesday, the 20th December, 1780, and the nineteenth day of polling, appear to be admitted under so many doubtful circumstances as to their right that the Committee are of opinion it is incumbent upon the counsel for the sitting Members to prove their titles to admission before they can allow them to remain as voters."

Whereupon Hallifax and Rogers declined to go on further, and after eleven days hearing, the Committee declared the "Mushrooms" and Bablake men illegal, and struck most of them off, when the result appeared for—

| | | | | | |
|------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|
| Mr. Roe Yeo (Tory) | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1298 |
| Lord Sheffield (Tory) | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1295 |
| Sir T. Hallifax (Whig) | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1178 |
| Mr. T. Rogers (Whig) | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1177 |

Majority for Yeo 120
Majority for Sheffield 117

"The Whiggish mob by Craven sent,
 To close the poll was their intent,
 To us their staffs they did present,
 The gods were our defenders.
 In spite of Craven and his crew,
 And what his howling mob can do,
 We'll let them know we're right true blue,
 And chair our glorious Members.

Fear not the Corporation frowns,
 Though they have fiftys in their gowns;
 They say they'll give you no four pounds,
 But surely you'll remember.
 Though they may have forgot the thing,
 Who was it murder'd Charles our King?
 At George their heavy darts they fling,
 May God be his defender."

The other, entitled "The Chairing Song," in jubilant tones exclaims—

"Ye sons of fair freedom assembled to-day,
 So honest and hearty, so cheerful and gay;
 Come all with one voice truly loyal and sing,
 God save Yeo and Sheffield, our Country and King.

At length, boys, we triumph—the contest is o'er,
 And Sheffield and Yeo represent us once more;
 Oh, long may they live, and those wretches despise,
 Whose prayers are mere cant, whose professions are lies.

Long may they live, boys, our rights to maintain,
 And 'Mushrooms' shall then be created in vain;
 Nor our polling in future shall Sheriffs prevent,
 When they know if they do, they'll to Newgate be sent.

So here's to our friends, to Lord Sheffield and Yeo,
 Whose hearts with a triumph right honest must glow;
 Whilst we with one voice truly loyal shall sing,
 God save Yeo and Sheffield, our Country and King."

On the Chairing Day, a considerable number of the Freemen "had five shillings given them upon a card" from the successful Members. "It was a most brilliant affair, witnessed by a vast concourse of people." "The friends of Freedom" did "all in their power that might add to the splendour and gaiety of the scene." The chairs were decked with party ribbons, and the Members, poised high on their supporters shoulders, passed through the streets in the usual manner; "whilst the Blue Freemen, decorated with cockades and decorations, walked four abreast, and made the appearance very delightful." After the chairing, a great feast took place at the White Bear Inn, and the supporters of the defeated candidates also dined together.

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE COVENTRY ELECTIONS ACT.

George III., continued (1781 to 1783).

Coventry Elections Bill—To stay illegal making of Freemen—Royal assent given—The Act and its clauses—Members vote to continue war—Lord Sheffield throws up his command—His kind actions at home—Resignation of Lord North's Ministry—On General Conway's motion against war prolongation—Rockingham and Selbourne Ministries—American independence acknowledged—Peace proclaimed at Coventry—Death of Mr. Yeo—William Seymour Conway elected instead—"A New Song."



ON the 12th March, 1781, "An Act for the better regulating Elections of Citizens to serve in Parliament for the City of Coventry," 21 Geo. III., cap. LIV., was introduced in Parliament, having for its object the staying of those illicit processes and illegal swearings-in of Freemen which had disgraced the late elections.

"This Bill, specially framed for Coventry, passed 14th March, and received Royal assent 15th July. The preamble states that 'whereas the right of election of Citizens to serve in the Parliament for the City of Coventry is, by the last determination of the House of Commons, on the 20th November, 1772, declared to be in such Freemen as have served seven years apprenticeship to one and the same trade in the said City, or the suburbs thereof, and do not receive alms or weekly charity, such Freemen being duly sworn and enrolled: And whereas great frauds and abuses were committed, in clandestinely admitting persons, having no such right, to the Freedom of the City of Coventry, during the late election, to the great infringement of the rights of the true electors of the said City, and in violation of the freedom of elections. To prevent such practices for the future, be it enacted by the King's Most Excellent Majesty, and by and with the advice of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the Authority of the same.' By Clause I. an 'open Council' was to be held at St. Mary's Hall, on the first Tuesday in the month, for receiving claims in writing of persons desirous of admission to the freedom, and of proclaiming their names aloud; and on the last Tuesday in the month, for such persons to attend and verify the particulars given on oath, when the Council should hear and determine such claims. Clause II. limited the expense of taking up the freedom to 'no greater fee than three shillings, over and above the necessary stamps.' Clause III. required that no one should be admitted unless he produced Deed or Indenture of seven years service; gave particulars with whom, and where, he served; with his residence during the term. By Clause IV. the Town Clerk was bound to enter the particulars in 'the Admission Book,' and the Mayor and members of the Court to sign the entry of admission. Clause V. required lists to be placed on the Church doors within twenty-four hours of the Court being held, and no Freemen were to be made during an election under Clause VI. By Clause VII., if at the poll a candidate required a Freeman, or Freemen, to take oath as to his admission and seven years service, he was to do so. Clause VIII. related to the penalty for persons guilty of perjury. Clause IX., that of a Returning Officer for admitting persons to poll without being sworn, if required so to do; and Clause X., that for members of the Council, on refusing to admit electors who came to prove their titles. By Clause XI., if such titles were doubtful, witnesses could be heard. Clause XII. related to the penalty of Town Clerk on neglect of duties, and Clause XIII. showed to what Freemen the Act extended. Under Clause XIV., the election booth was 'to be erected in the widest and most convenient part of the open Market Place called Cross Cheaping, not contiguous to any other building.' Clause XV. related to the recoveries of penalties, whilst

Clause XVI. related to the limitation of actions to one year. Clause XVII. declared the Act to be public, and the final Clause, XVIII., required that all Deeds or Indentures of apprenticeship should be registered with the Town Clerk (in the future) within six calendar months of the binding, or such Deeds and Indentures to be null and void."

The Coventry Members voted with the Ministry on 27th February, 1782, for continuing the war. Lord Sheffield was charged by opponents with giving his vote as a military man, "who, besides his title, has the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel, Commandant, with a regiment of Dragoons, worth £1,200 a year, which his subaltern officers, whose heads he was placed over, paid, it is said, for raising." The charge had some slight truth in it, and his Lordship decided to give up the regiment. His friend Gibbon congratulated him "in throwing away the military yoke," and adds, "Next summer you will sit down in the long-lost character of a country gentleman."

There were disasters abroad and discontent at home. Lord Sheffield greatly helped his poorer suffering neighbours at Fletching, where he resided. Lord North's Ministry resigned, after General Conway's successful motion against prolonging the war. Rockingham's Ministry came in during March, 1782, Charles Fox being Secretary of State, and General Conway Commander of the Forces. Selbourne continued, and re-constituted it after the Marquis's death, but it ended in February, 1783. Circumstances and the incompetence of Ministers forced Great Britain to acknowledge American independence, and peace was proclaimed in Coventry Market Place.

Mr. Yeo died in December, 1782, aged 42, and a contest was expected. Sir Thomas Hallifax was named, but never came, and

WILLIAM SEYMOUR CONWAY, ESQ.,

a son of the Earl of Hertford, was chosen without opposition, 18th January, 1783; when "A New Song," to the tune of "Jolly Mortals," appeared.

"Britons true and Independent,
No mean slaves can e'er enthrall;
There true freedom reigns ascendent,
In their breast, boys, one and all.

With a manly resolution,
Let us steadfastly unite,
To support the Constitution,
And defend our legal Right.

Hertford's noble race, in favour
For our cause themselves exert;
In return, then, we for ever
Faithfully will them support.

Witness how the noble Beauchamp
Did of late our foes subdue,
And in future still will teach 'em
Truth and Justice to pursue.

Then to Conway let's adhere, boys,
With a firm and steadfast heart;
While to us he is sincere, boys,
We from him will ne'er depart."

CHAPTER XLV.

THE KING AND PITT *versus* THE COALITION OF LORD NORTH AND FOX.

George III., continued (1784).

The Coalition Government of North and Fox—Coventry Members support it—Fox's East India Bill—"Carlo Khan"—The Pitt Ministry—Lord Sheffield's speeches and writings—Parliament dissolved—"A-begging we will go"—Sheffield and Conway at the White Bear—Corporation and the Ministry—"The New Song"—Sir Sampson Gideon and Mr. John Wilmot at the Rose and Crown—"Offchurch"—Parodying Sheffield's changeable actions—"Smile, smile, ye Freemen, smile"—Commencement of polling—"Sack-bags of guineas"—Mr. Conway's wishes—Cartoon: "The Jew Naturalized"—Election songs—"The Fox chase"—"Since Gideon and Wilmot now stand for our Town"—"A new ballad"—An Address—Progress of voting—A Corporation threat—"Mushrooms" again polled—The booth levelled—Verse thereon—Twelfth day's poll—"Midnight retreat" of Sheffield and Conway—Messrs. Gideon and Wilmot returned—Numbers polled—Celebrations—"Shuffle's Lamentation"—Cartoon: "The King's Blues; or, Loyal Fox-hunters"—The Chairing Song—Biographies of the Members.



THE Coalition Government of North, Fox, Burke, and others of different political principles, was formed in March, 1783. It determined to break the Royal Authority, and the Members for Coventry were amongst its supporters. Contrary to the King's desire, the reform of the Eastern Empire Bill passed the Commons, and Fox obtained the name of "Carlo Khan" on his triumph. The Lords threw out the Bill, the East India Company hurled its wealth against the Government, and the King designed to supplant Fox; whilst in December the Coalition ended, and William Pitt was entrusted with the formation of the Ministry which continued to 1801.

Lord Sheffield spoke in the House upon the British navigation law, and the commercial intercourse with Russia and elsewhere. The American loyalist officers, who left the States to escape Republican fury, had his especial regard. His published observations upon Ireland, and his suggested policy to render English intercourse with the Colonies permanent, show a liberal mind and a sound judgment.

Parliament was dissolved 25th March, 1784, when the patronage of administration was in the hands of Pitt. Lord Sheffield, as a supporter of North, was again solicited to stand for Coventry, and "the Whigs last shift," a Tory effusion to the tune of "A-begging we will go," records the asking of Fox's friend, Conway—

"Though oft we've begged of Hertford's Earl, still we will beg again,
To send his son to aid us, and if we beg in vain, yet a-begging we will go."

Sheffield and Conway took up their quarters at the White Bear, in the High Street, and commenced their canvass. It was anticipated that the Corporation, after the trouble of last election, would not interfere, and little attention was given to the London and out-voters. They were, however, quietly working with the Ministry to find them candidates. "The New song. The humble petition from the last Council House meeting of the Mayor and his Brethren, to old Beelzebub greeting," records—

"Dear Sir, we in Council assembled and set,
(Such a group of your friends ne'er before sure were met);
Most humbly inform you no friend we can find,
Our cause to espouse, if you should prove unkind.

We are always consistent to what we pretend,
To serve you and own you our very good friend;
Whate'er your commands are we're sure them to do,
For all our chief study is in pleasing you.

Dear Sir, without your support we must fall,
Without you our interest is certainly small;
Your enemies here very powerful have grown,
Which occasions us all to make piteous moan.

Then pray recommend us, with all possible speed,
A man to support us in this time of need;
If he answers our ends we'll him gladly embrace,
And acknowledge the favour to you face to face."

A few days before the poll commenced, "two Gentlemen of Independent Principles, Friends of their King and Country," supporters of Pitt, came forward, in the persons of Sir Sampson Gideon, Bart., and Mr. John Wilmot, stating their desire "to defend our glorious Constitution against the daring assaults of a desperate and dangerous faction, which has not scrupled at once openly to invade the undoubted prerogatives of the Crown and the most sacred rights of the people, for the purpose of gratifying their own inordinate ambition." They issued an address, made the Rose and Crown, in High Street, their headquarters, delivered speeches, and commenced a canvass. Many bills appeared. "Offchurch" says—

"Old Sacred History relates
How Samson moved the City gates;
But our Sampson more can do,
He'll carry e'en the City too."

And speaking of Lord Sheffield's changeable actions, another adds—

"Convinced now, gentlemen, that *America* was not to be dragooned into subjection, and finding that promotion grew rusty in the scabbard; foreseeing, also, that my country would have no business for my regiment, and that it would soon become to poor-too pay it, I resolved to sell.—I should have disdained, gentlemen, to have received *half-pay* from my *half-ruined* constituents. The profits of this transaction, making allowance for the *great loss* you know I sustained in the purchase of horses, when I raised the regiment, could not exceed the trifling sum of seven thousand pounds.—As a reward for my long and faithful services, I found I had only received an empty title, which had neither made me better nor *wiser* than I was before I possessed it; I determined, therefore, to take leave of my Sovereign, to make better terms with him hereafter.—When Lord North was abused by Charles Fox, I felt myself insulted also.—When Lord North shook hands with him, I at the same time shook hands with the man of the people. When he

became his Right Honourable friend, I became his Right Honourable friend also.—When Lord North supported the prerogative of the Crown, I supported it.—When Lord North took up the cudgels of the people, I commenced a patriot. Obstinate attached to no fixed system, I was yesterday a Tory. To-day I am a Whig, and to-morrow I will be either a Whig or a Tory, or anything you please, as best may accord with the occasion of the day. . . . Difficulties may arise in telling you what I am, but none occur to me in proposing what we, *just now*, ought to be.—We are Whigs; we must be on that account Dissenters or Presbyterians. Renouncing therefore, thus openly, all fellowship with the Church and *all that sort of thing*, we will convert the Draper's Hall into a Meeting House, where we will pray for the completion of our schemes.—Huzza boys! God save the man of the people. Huzza boys! for the black, inconsistent interest of Coventry. Huzza! *Charles Fox* for ever!

“Coventry, March 30th, 1784.”

The other side, none the less conspicuous with bill literature, issued the following—

“Smile, smile, ye Freemen, smile,
Lord Sheffield's come again;
A guardian of our isle,
Crowned with immortal fame.
No envious star shall dart a ray
Against this glorious, happy day.

Where'er you walk along
Behold the general cry,
Sheffield and Conway's come,
Their foes they soon will die.
Who to their words doth not stand true,
Their vows are like the morning dew.

Like as the serpent old
Our parents did beguile,
So with their cursed gold,
They'll bribe you with a smile.
Sheffield and Conway now shall tread
With victory o'er the viper's head.

Let us with loud huzzas
Re-echo their brave names;
Join, join, the cheerful lay,
Let every man stand firm,
And waft their praise from shore to shore,
Sheffield and Conway now encore.”

The poll commenced 3rd April, and no expense was spared by either candidate to induce the Freemen to give him their services. Sheffield and Conway spent wealth overflowing, but Gideon was immensely rich, and, assisted by the Ministry, determined to win both seats for himself and his brother-in-law, Mr. Wilmot. An elector tells how he “saw Sir Sampson with his Committee, sitting at table, amidst bowls of gold and silver inducements;” and another adds that upon one occasion the Baronet “received two sackbags of guineas, some of which were scrambled for by the mob.” Bills and squibs were numerous. An “Independent Freeman” reminds his fellows that Mr. Conway had at the last election wished “that sixpenny loaves might be as large as the White Bear Inn, and meat as large as the house opposite.” Gideon was accused of voting in the first place for Fox's India Bill, but on seeing the danger, he afterwards voted against it, and in a cartoon, Sir Sampson is shown mounted on a pig, exclaiming, “I am naturalized!” whilst the animal cries, “Buy! buy my pork!” in allusion to his Jewish origin.

The songs at this election were many in number, and characteristic of the times. Those of Gideon and Wilmot were exceedingly plentiful. One, purporting to be issued by Sheffield and Conway's friends, entitled, "An answer to a song lately published," concludes—

"Down with the Rose and Crown,
With *Constitution* down,
Down with the K——.
Hail to K—— Carlo Khan,
Sheffield and Conway's man,
And all the rebel clan,
Hail, *Carlo Khan!*"

But it is evidently issued by their opponents to annoy them. Songs like "Britannia's Call," and "Now or Never, addressed to the worthy Freemen of Coventry," have some merit, whilst one, entitled "Beelzebub's Trip to Coventry," is, to say the least, humorous. "The Fox Chase" has—

"Lord Shuffle's hounds, a sanguine pack,
Once proud a Fox to crush,
So altered are, they scorn to hurt
A hair upon his brush."

An epigram upon the names of the candidates, entitled "The Factions," is clever, but written with great party bias.

One of the songs is named "The Coventry Freeman's advice to his Brethren"—tune, "Oh, the roast beef of old England."

"Since Gideon and Wilmot now stand for our Town,
In support of our freedom, our King, and his Crown,
We'll ne'er vote for those who the whole would put down,
But for those try'd friends to old England,
But for those old English try'd friends.

If chosen, they say they will never desert you,
But to Coventry Freemen they'll ever prove true;
And who dare dispute them, my boys, they're true Blue:
Oh, the true Blues of old England,
Oh, the old English true Blues.

In times like the present, 'tis fit that we choose
For Senators those who have no party views,
And who pensions and places alike would refuse:
Those are true friends to old England,
Those are old England's true friends.

But Gideon and Wilmot, tho' oft they've been tried,
Their integrity yet could be ne'er set aside;
To be honest and loyal is their greatest pride:
Oh, those try'd friends to old England,
Oh, those old English try'd friends.

Then in making your choice do not long hesitate,
But fix on those men who wish well to the State,
Who the dread Coalition most cordially hate:
They are the friends to old England,
They are old England's true friends."

Another is "A New Ballad"—tune, "God save the King."

"God save great George our King!
No Conway, Sheffield, Byng!
No Carlo Khan!
Loyal our hearts abide,
No changing coat and side,
No *Cromwell Regicide*,
No *People's Man*!

Samson, in days of yore,
Swept off foes fifty score,
None could withstand;
When, with his mighty hands,
Foxes and Fire-brands,
He slew the hostile bands—
Rescued the Land.

Now Fox and Fire-brands
Join the inimical Bands,
Ruin ensues:
Harder our *Sampson's* work
'Gainst Sheffield, Fox, and Burke,
Enemies worse than Turk,
Aid him, ye *Blues*.

Down falls the mighty *Bear*,
Snap goes our *Sheffield* ware,
Brittle, though bright.
Sampson and *Wilmot* join,
Drive out the *Philistine*,
Six feet and inches nine!
Hail, *Blue* and *White*!

The following address was issued to the Freemen—

"You have now an opportunity of manifesting your attachment to His Majesty's person, family, and Government, by voting for Sir Sampson Gideon, Bart., and J. Wilmot, Esq., his known and zealous friends. Your late Members have forfeited the confidence of their King and country by the strenuous support they have afforded Mr. Fox, in his late struggle for sovereign and unconstitutional power. You have ever professed your affection and regard for your King, and will you now prove by your conduct that your professions were hypocritical and insincere? I trust not. I hope that as the Blue candidates have turned their coats and deserted their sovereign, the honest Blues will, with an indignant spirit, desert them. Let them see that neither Mr. Fox nor his supporters shall prevail upon you to forsake and abandon His Majesty King George at this important juncture. Only reflect for a moment upon the evils which their conduct had brought upon you. America lost, trade ruined, prices abated, and the poor starving. Empty looms and empty bellies, too, evidently prove this. And will you again send these men to Parliament? Do you love poverty? Do you love to see your dear children half-naked? Surely no. You cannot be so brutish. Then, my brethren, let us reject with honest indignation the authors of our present miseries. No wonder, while such men represent us, that meat, bread, and other articles of provision are so dear. The only way to get rid of these evils is to turn out the men who have brought them upon you. No Sheffield—No Conway—No Turncoat Members—No enemies to the King—No ruiners of trade—No exporters of mutton—But King George the Third—Sir Sampson Gideon—Mr. Wilmot—and the Independent Freemen of Coventry for ever—Huzza." The address is signed by "A Loyal and Independent Freeman," and there is this postscript—"Let the sons of Liberty and Loyalty flock to the Royal Standard at the Rose and Crown."

The polling dragged out its way slowly. Sir Sampson and Mr. Wilmot were both old electioneers; they spared no expense, and endeavoured to bring up the out-voters and others. At the close of the poll on the eighth day the numbers were—Sir Sampson Gideon, Bart., 386; John Wilmot, Esq., 385; Lord Sheffield, 386; Hon. Mr. Conway,

383; and 771 Freemen had polled. The Blue Committee frequently exhorted their Freemen to remain loyal, and, when some of the manufacturers supporting Sheffield and Conway refused their hands work for voting in opposition, obtained work for them in the manufactories of their friends. After nine or ten days polling the numbers were still doubtful, when the Corporation, acting under counsel's advice, declared they would poll those "Mushroom" Freemen whose names had not yet been struck off the enrolment list, and even polled four of them, well knowing they had the Ministry at their back in case of petition. This caused great commotion in the opposite party, and they were bent upon reprisals. After several days severe contest they became riotous, and on the morning of the 13th April a party of pretended voters, with axes and saws under their clothes, proceeded to the booth, which, as soon as the Sheriffs opened, they levelled to the ground, whilst the candidates were present. Naturally, the poll could not go on until the Sheriffs rebuilt it. A correspondence ensued between the council and candidates of both sides, when, after delay, the booth was rebuilt, and the Corporation still polled the "Mushrooms." The following bill appeared, dedicated

"To Sir Sampson Gideon, Bart., on the destruction of the *Booth* by the *Blues*, when an attempt was made to poll the *Mushrooms*, April 13th, 1784.

Sir Sampson's Hebrew forefather,
 When Pagan and Philistine Peers
 Held a long Feast with Mushroom Sauce,
 Pulled an old House about their Ears;
 But times are changed, and Hebrews too,
 For if a Mushroom now appears,
 Philistines of to-day decide
 To pull the House about *Sampson's Ears*."

The state of the poll was issued daily, and on 16th April—being the twelfth day of polling—the numbers stood: Sheffield 558, Gideon 556, Wilmot 553, Conway 552. Eleven hundred and fourteen Freemen had polled, but amongst them were one hundred and forty-one for Gideon and Wilmot who at the last contest had supported Sheffield and Conway. The poll could but last for fifteen days by the Act, and the Corporation again threatened to record the "Mushrooms." The contest was extremely expensive, and the Coalition candidates, finding they were unable to maintain the majority, declined to prolong it. They withdrew, and left the City during the evening of the 16th, whereupon the Sheriffs received the votes of thirty-two Freemen for

SIR SAMPSON GIDEON, AND JOHN WILMOT, ESQ.,
 and declared them elected, the final numbers standing—

| | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| For Sir Sampson Gideon, Bart. | ... | ... | ... | 588 |
| „ John Wilmot, Esq. | ... | ... | ... | 585 |
| „ Lord Sheffield. | ... | ... | ... | 558 |
| „ W. S. Conway, Esq. | ... | ... | ... | 552 |
| Majority of Sir Sampson Gideon, 30. | Majority of Mr. John Wilmot, 27. | | | |
| Total polled, 1,146. | | | | |

Great were the rejoicings of the winning party, and they celebrated the victory as their fathers had done, with sheep and ox roastings, amidst the tunes of the old Town fifers and drummers. The evening when "Sheffield and Conway took flight from the Bear" was long remembered, as "Shuffle's Lamentation ; or, The Midnight Retreat," to the tune "Chevy Chase," relates—

"Three years ago, or thereabouts,
When warring was a trade,
I felt myself a soldier stout
As ever wore cockade.
The bonny bells of Trinity
For me did sweetly ring ;
As great as *Cæsar* then was I,
As happy as a King.

I swell'd with pride, the world defy'd :
At Aldermen I spurn'd ;
But to my sorrow, think, alas !
How are the tables turn'd !
My blood runs chill ! go where I will
There is no rest for me ;
I wish I never had come near
The Blues of Coventry.

The *sixteenth day of April* last
Forget I never shall ;
No foreign foe e'er struck a blow
My courage to appal ;
But when *Sir Sampson Gideon* came,
A cruel tale to tell,
His friends bereav'd me of my fame,
And rang my doleful knell.

Accurs'd for ever be the day
That brought addresses on,
For nought besides from Coventry
Could make *Lord Shuffle* run.
To gain a seat in Parliament
I'll make no further strife ;
To this dear place I thought, till now,
I'd wedded been for life.

Much reason have I now to say
My pleasant days are gone ;
The bells, I fear, I ne'er shall hear
Again ring "*WHITTINGTON*."
Adieu, dear *Charles* ! farewell, friend *Joe* !
We all have cause to frown,
For since the City first I knew
The world's turn'd upside down.

I'll take my flight, in dread of night,
To me 'twere death to stay ;
For ere I quit the gates, methinks
I hear the people say :
The hero *Shuffle*'s shuffled off ;
They seem to say in scorn :
He's fairly gone, gone, *Gonaway*,
And never to return."

The same subject was depicted in a cartoon entitled "The King's Blues ; or, Loyal Fox-hunters."

The chairing took place on the 21st, and the "Song for the Chairing," to the tune of "See the Conquering Hero Comes," was as follows—

"See the legal Members come,
Sound your fifes and beat your drum ;
Sons of mirth, begin the song,
Fire with joy a British throng.

Hark what plaudits rend the air !
See Sir Sampson in the chair !
On the rustic shoulders borne
Of those who treat base threats with scorn."

"SONG FOR FULL CHORUS.

TUNE—"Come, ye lads who wish to shine."

Come, ye grave, and come, ye gay,
All in mirth concurring ;
On this happy holiday
May not a loom be stirring.

CHORUS—

Join the jovial, free-borne train,
Manly and united ;
Peace and harmony maintain,
For now the City's righted.

Trade revive, and henceforth drown
Party spleen and passion ;
Those you've now returned will soon
Return the obligation.

CHORUS—Join the jovial, &c.

Long to see the contest close,
All the land has waited ;
Care be gone, the work is done,
And gloriously completed.

CHORUS—Join the jovial, &c."

Sir Sampson Gideon, Bart., of St. James's Square, London, was the son of Mr. Sampson Gideon, the Jewish loan contractor, and was extremely rich, having, according to local tradition, "a guinea a minute coming in." Gideon the elder rose from a humble origin to that of a rich City stockbroker, and financier, to the leading gentry. In 1752, when Pelham, the Chancellor of Exchequer, proposed the Jew Naturalization Bill, Gideon warmly supported those who voted for it ; and the next year he had large gains by the easy and wholesale purchase and sale of State lottery tickets, but the bulk of his fortune was made at the time of the Jacobite rebellion. When the Pretender reached Derby, stocks fell alarmingly, a panic set in, whereupon Gideon bought all he could get, and when Prince Charles retreated, became a millionaire in consequence. He died in 1762, and a newspaper curiously

says: "Gideon is dead, worth more than the whole land of Canaan! He has left the reversion of all his milk and honey—after his son and daughter—to the Duke of Devonshire, without insisting that he should assume his name or become circumcised." His son was brought up as a Protestant, and educated at Eton and Oxford. He married Miss Mary Marrow Wilmot, sister of his colleague, Mr. John Wilmot, M.P. The King created him a Baronet in recognition of the father's services to Pitt's administration, and subsequently made him an Irish Peer, under the title of Baron Eardley. He was an excellent scholar, and his great friend, Dr. Parr, would clap him on the back, exclaiming, "Old boy, *Par pari gaudet*." He purchased the beautiful Belvedere estate, near the Thames, in 1777. He sat for Cambridgeshire in 1770, and was re-elected in 1774, but in 1780, although supported by the Ministry, was unable to retain the seat. In November following he was elected for Midhurst, Sussex, and Coventry in 1784.

Mr. John Wilmot, F.R.S., of Bedford Row, London, was the second son of the Right Hon. Sir John Eardley Wilmot, Chief Justice of Common Pleas, and was born in 1750. He was educated for the Church at Oxford, and graduated B.A., but the death of an elder brother altered matters, and he studied for the law. Having been called to the Bar in 1771, he became attached to the Midland Circuit, and known at Coventry. He was appointed a Master in Chancery; and chosen M.P. for Tiverton in 1776 and 1780. He proved very assiduous in his duties, and opposed the American War. Mr. Pitt appointed him a Commissioner to enquire into the claims of the American loyalists, and subsequently of the French refugees from the Revolution in that country. The former, appreciating his endeavours on their behalf, commissioned Benjamin West to paint his portrait (with the other Commissioners in the background), at a cost of 500 guineas. He resided at Bruce Castle, Tottenham, and at Berkswell Hall, near Coventry, which he rebuilt, the older house being "a red-brick mansion, with white gabled windows, of the time of Charles II." He assumed the surname of Eardley, and married—first, Frances, daughter of Samuel Sainthill, Esq., by whom he had a son (John Eardley, created a Baronet) and four daughters; and secondly, Sarah, daughter of Colonel Haslam, but had no further issue.

CHAPTER XLVI.

MATTERS ARISING OUT OF THE LAST CONTEST.

George III., continued (1784 to 1790).

Mr. Pitt's majority—Royal opposition to Lord Hertford—Mr. Conway elected for Downton—Presentation to Lord Sheffield—Consolation—Trial as to rights of "Mushrooms"—The case of Richard Oldham—Coventry Canal powers—Cheylesmore leased to Lord Hertford—Presents to Freemen—Death of Lord Lifford—Sir Sampson Gideon created Baron Eardley, of Ireland—Act for better paving, cleaning, lighting, and watching the City.



R. PITT had a decidedly favourable House to deal with after the elections. Walpole tells how the Whig families had been "tricked out of seats," and that "the Royal finger had too evidently tampered, as well as singularly as revengefully, towards Lord North and Lord Hertford;" but although Mr. Conway was rejected at Coventry, he found a seat, amidst great difficulties, at Downton on 26th June; and in February, 1785, Lord Sheffield was presented with a massive gold cup, subscribed for by his Coventry friends, inscribed with his arms and an inscription—

"To John, Lord Sheffield.
From the
Independent Freemen of Coventry,
In testimony of their approbation of his conduct in Parliament.
MDCCLXXXIV."

Gibbon, consoling with Lord Sheffield, wrote: "I so much rejoice in your divorce from that deceitful Kitty Coventry, that I do not care what marriage you contract: a great City would not suit your dignity," and when his friend was chosen in 1790, he congratulates him upon his "glorious election for Bristol. Most sincerely do I congratulate your exchange of a cussed, expensive jilt; who deserted you for a rich Jew; for an honourable connection with a chaste and virtuous matron;" and speaking of "those foolish, obsolete words, Whig and Tory," adds: "In the American War," "Your Lordship was a Tory, although you supposed yourself a Whig. Since the Coalition, all the general principles have been confounded; and if there ever was an opposition to men, not measures, it is the present."

The Sheffield and Conway party now caused writs to be issued against the "Mushrooms" who, still on the roll, were polled at the late election. All except four gave up their right, and they stood trial at the August Assizes. Three were struck off,



JOHN WILMOT, ESQ.,
M.P. for Coventry, 1784.

W. P. 1784. SPENCER & CO. LONDON.



SIR SAMPSON GIDEON, BART., BARON EARDLEY OF THE KINGDOM OF IRELAND,
M.P. for Coventry, 1784.

but the jury could not agree as to the fourth, and were at length removed to the King's Head Inn, confined there for the night, and in the morning hunger forced them to give a verdict "against the right of the remaining person."

Another matter arising out of the late election had also to be settled.

"At Coventry Assizes, early in 1785, Geo. Harris, Joseph Atkins, and Thomas Goode, were sentenced to six months imprisonment each for inhumanly beating, and afterwards *tarring and feathering*, Richard Oldham, during the time of the last Coventry election. The evidence produced at the Bar was in substance as follows: Richard Oldham, then servant to a clergyman in the neighbourhood, was standing in the High Street, near the Rose and Crown Inn, and, without any provocation whatever (except his being a supposed friend of Sir Sampson Gideon and Mr. Wilmot), was seized by the prisoners and about twenty or thirty others, dragged by the hair of his head from thence along the street, and down the yard belonging to the White Bear Inn, then forced into a stable, and there much beat and abused, one of the prisoners crying out, 'Hang him! shew him no mercy!' though the poor man was begging for it in the most pathetic manner. After this, they dragged him in the same way from thence to Broadgate, and then to the Butcher Row, a space of more than one hundred yards; during this time they violently tore his clothes off him, and when naked, poured a quantity of tar upon him, and because he should not know his tormentors, his face was covered and his eyes were closed with it; they then strewed feathers over him, and thus the poor wretch was permitted to escape with his life, though greatly bruised and dangerously injured.—The Judge described the horrid act in the most striking language, and among other remarks, he compared the perpetrators of it to American savages, and regretted that the name of Briton should be disgraced by such an inhuman transaction."

The "Coventry Mercury," 7th February, 1818, says: "In the twenty-sixth year of George III. an Act was passed entitled, An Act to enable the Company of Proprietors of the Coventry Canal Navigation to complete their said canal to Fradley Heath, in the County of Stafford, and other matters proposed therein mentioned."

The park at Cheylesmore had been in the Corporation's hands many years under lease; it was now let to Lord Hertford under a term of forty-two years, upon his paying £2,000 down and a small annual rental, but the estate was afterwards sold to the Marquis.

On January 3rd, 1789, Sir Sampson Gideon sent a Christmas present to the Freemen in his interest, consisting of £150.

James Hewitt, Lord Lifford, died 28th April, 1789, and was buried in Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin, having for twenty-two years served the position of Lord Chancellor of Ireland with integrity, firmness, and ability.

Early in 1790, the King conferred an Irish Peerage, under the title of Baron Eardley, upon Sir Sampson Gideon, a title chosen from the name of his wife's family. At the instance of Lord Eardley, an Act was obtained, 30 Geo. III., 3 ch. 26, entitled "An Act for the better paving, cleaning, lighting, and watching of the City of Coventry and the suburbs thereof, for the removing and preventing of nuisances and annoyances therein, and for regulating the public wells and pumps within the said City and suburbs."



CHAPTER XLVII.

A TRIANGULAR FIGHT.

George III., continued (1790).

Parliament dissolved—The old Members again come forward—Party troubles—Publicans and London out-voters—A lawyer's opinion—William Wilberforce Bird, a candidate—Some account of him—His connection with the silk masters—Verses on illicit purposes—Splitting party colours—Commencing the poll—Curious bill upon proceedings at the booth—Lord Sheffield returned for Bristol—Comes to Coventry—Mr. Conway chosen for Orford—Political play bills: "The Midnight Retreat" and "The Jew Naturalized"—London Committees and out-voters—A memorandum—Lord Eardley's goodness proven—Song: "No warlike theme my muse employs"—Cartoon: "All things to all men"—A Bird and his feathers—Close of the voting—Numbers polled—Sampson, Lord Eardley, and John Wilmot, Esq., returned—Addresses of thanks—Mr. Bird undaunted by defeat—Promises to again contest—The chairing and song—Keeping the peace.



WHEN Parliament had been dissolved in June, 1790, the old Members, acceding to a numerously-signed requisition, promised again to stand. The Corporation were still their friends, and the Members conduct had given such general satisfaction that opposition was little expected, and victory seemed certain. Yet the Corporation party, finding the publicans bills at the former election excessive, had refused to pay more than fifteen shillings in the pound, which gave considerable offence. The balances were now hastily paid; but not before their opponents issued a handbill entitled "An honourable method of securing votes, humbly recommended to candidates in general," wherein were printed instructions as to the way of securing "opponent landlords," and afterwards "putting on the screw," recommending, in proof of the efficiency of the method, application to be made "to the agents of Lord Eardley and Mr. Wilmot at St. Mary's Hall, or the publicans of Coventry." The late expensive contests, however, affected both parties; for whilst the publicans and their accounts troubled the gentlemen of the Corporation; Lord Sheffield's supporters had similar anxiety over their out-voters from the Metropolis, and presented a case to Mr. Thomas Cooper, the celebrated London barrister, for his opinion thereon. These Londoners had been paid £2 12s. each for their expenses in going to, and returning back from, Coventry; whilst the opposite side had given £4 9s. each to their London voters; and they now declared that unless paid the deficiency (£1 17s. per

man), they would vote for the opposition. It was desired that a safe way should be found to pay this, but how legally to do so, in the face of an election, was questionable. The lawyer's opinion did little to help matters; "I think," he advises, "if the money could be safely paid by anyone, it might be by Lord Sheffield. I scarcely know anything in the world that may not be done directly, which can be accomplished by any indirect measure," but doubtless the latter was resorted to in order to settle the matter.

"The Independent Freemen who scorn to become the mercenary tools of corrupt influence and tyranny are earnestly requested to meet at the Drapers Hall on Thursday next." Such was an intimation of coming opposition to the Corporation candidates; and Mr. William Wilberforce Bird, a silk merchant, of Little Park Street, Coventry, and afterwards of the Spring, Kenilworth, became the nominee of the silk manufacturers, and "Independent interest." Mr. Bird, as a native of Coventry, understood the Freemen's wants, and his ancestors had introduced the silk trade into Coventry by means of French refugees driven from their country in 1685 by the edict of Nantes. Such workmen settling at Coventry, inter-married with its people, and many of their descendants were yet connected with the silk trade. "Messrs. Gideon and Wilmot are" said by Mr. Bird's friends to be "unacquainted with the interests and unconnected with the inhabitants," but opponents objected to Mr. Bird's opposition to "the Weavers Bill," whilst Gideon and Wilmot had endeavoured, almost unaided in the House, to prevent a tax on ribbons. When the Minister considered this duty necessary, the Coventry master silk manufacturers, in alarm, had formed a Committee, and with Mr. Bird as their Chairman, sent a deputation to Mr. Pitt, who prevailed upon him to lay the tax upon silk instead. Of this freeing the manufactured article and placing the duty on the raw material, Mr. Bird and the silk masters now took credit, but some weavers felt there was more underneath. Says "An Old Weaver"—

"Would ribbon masters lend their purse
Unless they had some end in view?
No—no—at bottom there's a curse,
A curse that's aimed at me and you!
Now if this mottled Bird we choose,
The masters then will make us laws,
And prices fix we *can't* refuse;
Then will you serve so vile a cause?"

How the prediction was sought to be fulfilled will be seen.

Party colours now devolved into New Blue, and Old Blue; or "Mazarine" on the one side, and Sky Blue on the other. Yellow being still the Corporation badge.

Lord Eardley had intended, if there was no contest, to have re-pewed St. Michael's Church, but he now spent the money for electioneering purposes instead. He undoubtedly paid a considerable sum to secure votes; seven and ten pounds were occasionally illicitly given for special ones, and an opponent's bill adds—

"A man that would his soul and body sell
 For seven guineas, sell them both to hell;
 Can Jewish gold the perjured soul set free
 From dire remorse, or make them happy be?
 A wretch who thus his character has stained
 With ill-got pelf, by base corruption gained,
 Shun his society, no converse hold
 With him who has his King and Country sold."

If, however, one side offended in this matter, the other did the same, and in "The Real True Blue" occurs the following—

"Their thousands shall not us dismay,
 We wish them hearts to spend them,
 We can spend as much as they,
 And afterwards can lend them;
 Jews that do in riches roll,
 Have dealt in fraud and plunder,
 But let them meet us fair at poll,
 We'll make them soon knock under.
 Of every woeful, wicked set,
 That is within the nation,
 None can boast a blacker jet
 Than our *good* Corporation;
 So far from honesty they're sunk—
 Nay, I dare venture further—
 They'd hang a Blue for getting drunk,
 A Yellow save from murder."

The poll commenced on the 19th, and lasted eight days. The "*good* Corporation," as usual, exerted power to retain voters for its candidates, and although such influence varied at different times, it was now put forward to a considerable extent. The illegal making of Freeman had ceased, but candidates and agents closely scanned the Freeman's votes when presented at the poll booth, and a bill of the time asks—

"Is it fair for a candidate to stand close to the person who comes up to poll, and *palm* him before he declares for whom he means to poll? Is it an honest proceeding in a Returning Officer to appoint a particular part of the booth for taking the poll, and instantly to change it? Is it legal or constitutional to have fellows stationed at the place of polling to tell the electors whom they are to poll for? Is it fair and honest for the Sheriffs to permit such conduct? Is it legal for the Sheriffs to *carry the vote* to the Poll Clerk at the distance of two yards and report it to him, when he (the Poll Clerk) is bound by his oath to take it himself? Is it honest in any Returning Officer to give a false report of a vote to the Poll Clerk, and particularise the candidates for whom the vote was given, when the person coming to vote was objected to as a minor, and never sworn? If a Returning Officer" (continues the bill) "should commit so corrupt and infamous a violation of public justice by abusing the confidence reposed in him by the Legislature and his fellow Citizens, and wantonly and wilfully breaking the oaths he has sworn to keep inviolate, what punishment could be thought too severe for him? What is the punishment for corrupt and wilful perjury? Is it not cropping, slitting, burning, and the pillory?"

These "exceedingly modest," but happily obsolete punishments, were—cropping, cutting off the ears; slitting, slitting the nostrils; burning, marking the initial letters of the crime on the cheeks with a red-hot iron; the pillory, standing exposed in the same.

Mr. Bird's party had not attempted a regular canvass. Lord Sheffield, who was contesting a seat at Bristol, congratulated his Coventry friends on having found a local

man who had other recommendations than money, "whose ancestors have been truly useful to you, who have spent their fortunes amongst you in a manner which is of more service to you than all the money that ever was, or ever can be, squandered by septennial visitors." His Lordship was chosen for Bristol on the 19th June, and then came to aid his friend at Coventry, accompanied by Mr. Sheridan and other gentlemen. On the 21st, William Seymour Conway, Esq., was elected M.P. for Orford.

The following political play-bill was issued by the Blue party—

"Speedily will be performed,
At the WHITE BEAR, in this City,
The Celebrated Comic Tragedy, called
THE MIDNIGHT RETREAT.

Principal PERFORMERS as follows:—

FLIGHT, by Master BILLY WILBERFORCE, being his first appearance in this character. He will amuse the Company with some pretty little Tricks, particularly in the Art of Flying, which he will perform with great Dexterity (having been Lately under the Tuition of an experienced Performer), to the Astonishment of his delighted Partisans and the Confusion of the disappointed Landlords and Landladies of this City.

CONDUCTOR, LORD SHUFFLE, who about six years ago acted the former character with great agility, and is just arrived from Bristol to perform his present Part. He will divert the audience with a curious Oration upon *Wind and Weather-cocks*, followed by a Song, to the Tune of 'When late I and Conway took flight from the Bear.' To be succeeded by a Solemn *Dirge*. The Musical parts under the direction of that Child of Nature, Master *Russwood*; the Vocal Parts by Dear *Charley*, Dr. Free-her, Master Mash, &c., &c.

HARBINGER, by MR. SHERY-DAN. A late capital performer at *St. Stephen's*, who obligingly accompanied Lord *Shuffle* to this City, but is gone forward to provide for the Accommodation of his Friends on their Journey.

BUSYBODY, by Master VEN-WING, lately arrived from *Milk Street*, who will divert the Company with some *Underhand* Performances, and curious Exploits, by his little Monkey Tricks in the Poll Booth and various other parts of the City.

PUZZLE-LAW, by Lawyer ROBSON, who will dance an Irish Jig, to the Tune of 'Arrah, my Honeys, we're foremost behind.' To be followed by a Country Dance by Masters Owen, Gilbut, &c., &c., to the tune of 'How shall we look the New Blues in the Face?'

After the PLAY, DR. RATTLEAWAY and other Capital Performers will entertain the Company with a lecture on *Swearing and Elocution*.

The whole to conclude with a Solemn FUNERAL PROCESSION—chief Mourners, the Disconsolate OLD BLUES; Supporters of the Pall, a number of over-bearing SILK MASTERS, from the Metropolis. The great Bell of each Church to toll muffled during the Procession.

N.B.—A large number of Smelling Bottles are preparing, and may be had at the *Glauber's Head*, for the use of such Mazarine and Blue Ladies and Gentlemen who may be too much affected at the moving scene.

VIVAT REX ET REGINA."

The Bird party, not to be out-done, replied in the following bill—

"This day will be performed, in a commodious Booth, erected for the purpose, a celebrated entertainment, called

THE JEW NATURALIZED.

by a most capital group of performers.

ACT I., SCENE I.

A celebrated MUM ORATOR, from *St. Stephen's Chapel*, will make his appearance in the character of SHYLOCK, and will sing a favourite song called "'Tis true I vas a chew, but I vas naturalized,' &c.

He will also deliver a lecture upon Elocution, which being a very somniferous Quality, his TOAD EATER will step forward, and after a humane Apology for the *Weakness* of his Friend, will in a most ravenous manner entertain the Audience with a description of the various methods of Ravishments, &c., as performed by himself and learned friend.

SCENE 2.

A favourite duet on the Jew's Harp by MUM ORATOR, and the newly-invented *Jelly Glasses* by Ald. *Soap-suds*, to the following Air—

'Simple SIMON SOAP-SUDS, just benighted,
Struck with the Sword and Mace, has grown dim sighted;
Forgets the neighbouring CHAINS, he used to shave and lather,
And scarcely knows (so proud he's grown) he ever had a father.'

At the conclusion of which a CREATURE will make his appearance in the shape of a man habited as a CLERK, who will divert the company with a variety of *Tricks*, and to show that not the smallest Vestiges of Human Nature are concerned in his composition, he will exhibit his MONSTROUS CLAWS; whose notoriety decency forbids to mention; also his famous exploit with the TANKARD, from which, at a certain motion of his, shall proceed the most *odoriferous Effluvia*, to the astonishment of all present.

N.B.—The Proprietor of this animal, conscious of its singularity, offers 100 guineas to any Person who shall show the like.

Between the Acts will be exhibited an *Infant Goliath*, in the character of TOM THUMB, the Great Brother of the Noted BINGY, when, after entertaining the company with a great variety of *Infant Squalls*, his Nurse, to compose the *Brat*, will sing the much-admired Air of 'Hush-a-by, Baby. Also, NEDDY INGE will dance a favourite Hornpipe, accompanied by LAWYER PIANO, to the TUNE of

'The golden horns which deck thy brow.'

Immediately after will make his appearance as an *Infernal*, in the Dress of a MINISTER, who proves *False Swearing* no *Perjury*, as expressed in the following couplet—

'It's easy to evade an Oath when to the Booth you're come;
Instead of kissing of the Book, you only kiss your Thumb.'

ACT II.

THE DOWNFALL OF JUSTICE.

By those Tools of a Party, Messrs. Dareall, Farthing Face Fos—r, Osg—d, M—lls, &c., who, after a variety of *artful evasions*, *gross misrepresentations*, sly subterfuges, and impudent falsehoods, will clearly and logically prove that the Advocates for *Freedom and Liberty* are its *greater enemies*, whilst they who are EARDLEY'S Friends are its chief supporters; in confirmation of which two Imps of Darkness will be introduced, who will cause the greatest astonishment at their consummate impudence, unparalleled villainy, and unblushing countenances.

They are supposed to be two of the most capital performers this or any other age have produced. They are remarkable for *Chicane* and *Cunning*, *petty Tricks* of Art and *Underhand dealings*. The one under the MASK OF RELIGION will shew that it is part of a *good subject to cheat the King*. The other, who assumes no mask at all (unless occasional Deafness), will prove it to be the duty of an *Honest man to oppress the poor*.

After beginning a SOLILOQUY, beginning 'Tho' NOXON and BUTLER to Newgate were sent,' and the admired song, 'Sure two such *Sheriffs* ne'er were chose but by a *worthless Corporation*,' they will quit the stage singing the following duet—

'Search Earth, search H—ll, the Devil cannot find
Two agents like us S—ffs to his MIND.'

The whole to conclude with a VIEW OF BRIBERY HALL; OR, A STRUGGLE FOR POWER, shewing the COFFERS OF SAMPSON, who repeats—

'Though Samson's strength lay in his Hair,
Yet mine is in my purse, Sirs.'

He is surrounded by a set of JUSTASSES, *Gamblers*, and *Plunderers* of every description, and other characters too *unmeaning* to deserve Attention.

The Company will then return to a SUMPTUOUS ENTERTAINMENT, called MUSHROOM FEAST, where a variety of *Juggling Tricks* will be exhibited, too tedious to mention.

No admittance behind the Scenes.

VIVAT REX ET REGINA."

The London Committees exerted themselves greatly to send down the Freemen from that City for their respective candidates ; Eardley and Wilmot had 214, and Bird 143. Over fifty out-voters came from Birmingham, and others from Banbury, Bristol, Yorkshire, Chester, Wiltshire, Liverpool, Leicester, Manchester, Newbury, Northampton, Norwich, Nantwich, Oakham, Rugby, Reading, Stratford-on-Avon, Stoney Stratford, Tarporly, Tunbridge, Tamworth, Worcester, Warwick, Wolverhampton, Walsall, West Bromwich, Chatham, Portsmouth, and Sheerness. Their conveyance cost a considerable sum, and a pencilled memorandum in a poll book of this election, placed to the name of an out-voter, tells its own story : "Received four guineas of Lord Eardley's Committee in London to come in his interest, and when come to Coventry, poll'd a single Bird—ungrateful ; died a pauper of Trinity Parish, November 4th, 1799." A voter named Liquorish, coming from London to poll for Eardley and Wilmot, fell off the coach on its entering St. Albans, and was killed on the spot. Sir Sampson was much upset on hearing of the incident, but promptly ordered the person to be decently buried at his expense, and settled £20 per annum upon the widow for life.

Amongst the songs of this election is the following—

"No war-like theme my muse employs,
But one of equal merit ;
I sing the praise of Honest Boys,
Who boast a free-born spirit.
No base corruption sways their voice,
No bribe can e'er enslave them ;
The Jew will see he's not their choice—
'Tis *Bird* that's born to save them.
Then oh protect the NOBLE BLUE,
Be mindful of his merit ;
And when your dastard foes pursue,
He'll show a God-like spirit.

Were SHEFFIELD'S virtues ever dear ?
Say, FREEMEN, did you prize them ?
Then curse the crew that drove him hence,
Detest them and despise them ;
Scourge all the tribe with vengeful arm—
Severe the flagellation,
Nor let a JEW be said to join
The Rulers of a Nation.
Then oh protect, &c.

Then rouse, my Boys, with one accord,
BIRD calls you forth to glory ;
Oh, give a *native* your support,
'Twill grace your future story.
His claims are just, he knows our trade,
From him you'll find protection,
For souls like yours and hearts like his
Were formed for close connection.
Then oh protect, &c."

A cartoon was now issued showing Mr. Bird promising "all things to all men," in his desire to gain votes. Its amusing character will be at once apparent.

The Bird party kept open the poll as long as possible, with but little chance of success, which caused considerable annoyance to their opponents, who, in "A celebrated speech, paraphrased for the benefit of the disconsolate Old Blues," say—

"Now my friend, Mr. Bird, take advice of a friend,
For a seat in St. Stephen's your money don't spend;
If you've some feathers left, to the warehouse retire,
And the rage of the Blues will that moment expire."

When the poll ceased on the eighth day, the numbers stood—

| | | | | |
|---------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| For Lord Eardley ... | ... | ... | ... | 1398 |
| John Wilmot, Esq. ... | ... | ... | ... | 1393 |
| W. W. Bird, Esq. ... | ... | ... | ... | 1126 |
| | | | | <hr/> |
| Majority for Lord Eardley | ... | ... | ... | 272 |
| „ „ J. Wilmot, Esq. | ... | ... | ... | 267 |

There had been 2,524 Freemen polled, and although the fight had been a three-cornered one, but 23 of them had split their votes. Out of 1,860 resident Freemen, 1,202 were connected with the weaving trade, whilst there were but 35 watchmakers.

SAMPSON GIDEON, LORD EARDLEY., AND JOHN WILMOT, ESQ.,

again becoming Members, issued addresses of thanks to the Freemen, but Mr. Bird, undaunted by defeat, promised to again contest the City. The usual rejoicing took place on 30th June, when the following Chairing Song, composed to the tune of "See the Conquering Hero comes," was issued—

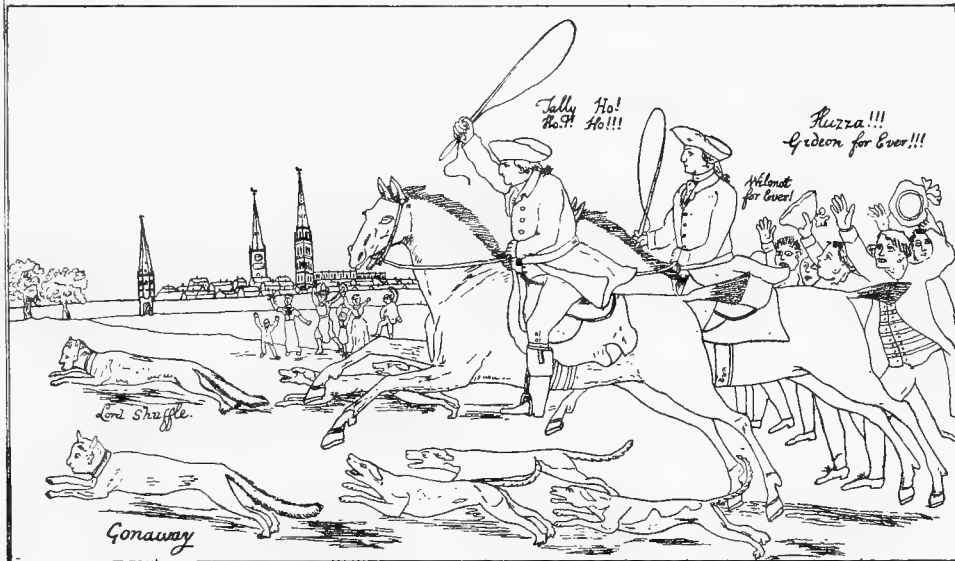
"Sons of Freedom now rejoice,
Triumph in your Happy choice;
Spread the joyous tidings far,
Virtue mounts on Glory's car.
Spread, &c.

See the gay procession move,
Hail the men your hearts approve;
Freemen flocking round the chair,
Shouts of Victory rend the air.
Freemen, &c.

Floating in the Festive Bowl,
Joy dilates each generous soul;
Celebrates with heart-felt mirth,
Eardley's virtues, Wilmot's worth.
Celebrates, &c."

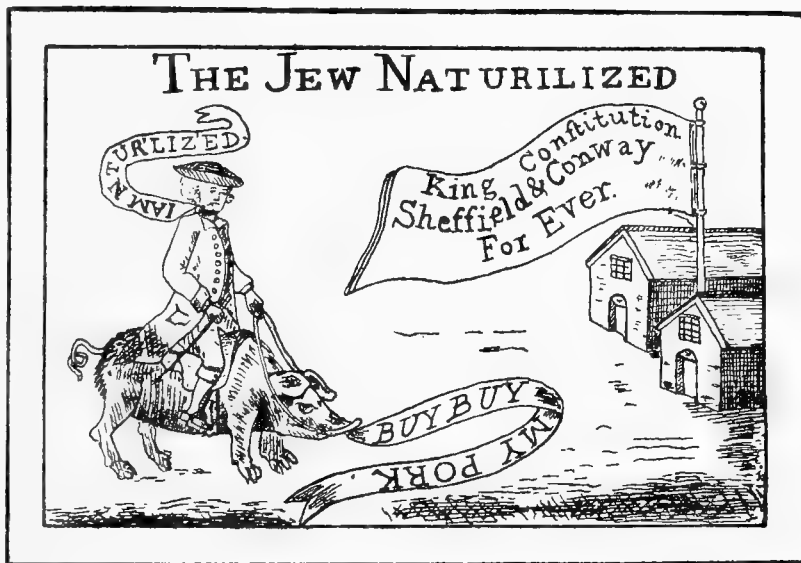
At night the City was in a state of riot, and many windows were broken "by a lawless banditti," as the Mayor, John Whitwell's, handbill records, "headed and encouraged by persons of some credit residing in the City," whose conduct gave his Worship and the City Magistrates considerable trouble at the "Rotation Office," in the Mayor's Parlour, for some days after.

THE KING'S BLUES, OR LOYAL FOXHUNTERS.



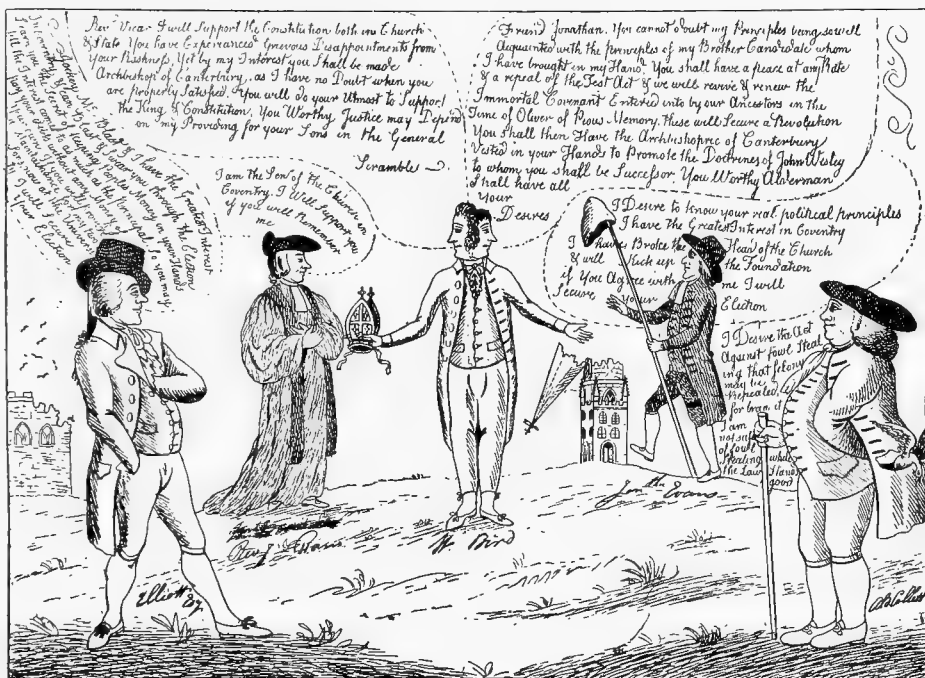
"THE KING'S BLUES, OR LOYAL FOXHUNTERS."

(From the Author's Collection.)



"THE JEW NATURALIZED."

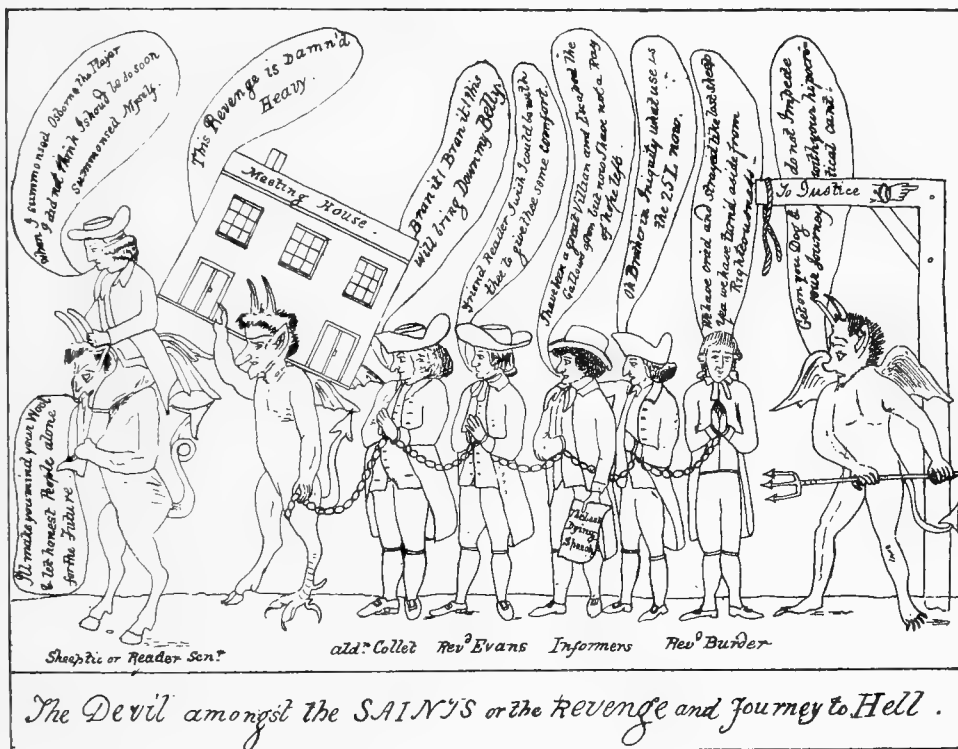
(From the Collection of the late MR J. LINES, in the Coventry Free Reference Library.)



THE MAN OF THE PEOPLE, ALL THINGS TO ALL MEN

"THE MAN OF THE PEOPLE. ALL THINGS TO ALL MEN."

(From the Author's Collection.)



"THE DEVIL AMONGST THE SAINTS, OR THE REVENGE AND JOURNEY TO HELL."

(From the Collection of the late W. READER, ESQ., in the Bodleian Library, Oxford.)

CHAPTER XLVIII.

LOCAL LOYALTY DURING THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

George III., continued (1790 to 1793).

A threatened petition—Satirical handbill—Sheriffs publish poll book—Seceders—Widening the streets—"Work for the Coroner"—Mr. Wilmot and Warren Hastings impeachment—Majority of Lord Eardley's son—Presents—Lady Craven desired to find a candidate—Effects of the French Revolution—Birmingham riots—Position of Coventry Dissenters—An extraordinary cartoon—Republican literature spread—Loyal attachment shown—Publicans resolution—Quakers declaration—Baptist Dissenters publication—A Loyal Town's meeting—War with France—Tom Paine burnt in effigy—Laying out the Coventry Park.

THE "Mazarine" party endeavoured to get up a petition against Messrs. Eardley and Wilmot's return, and published lists of the "Mushroom" Freemen appeared. An opposition satirical handbill invited "the old swearers of the New Blue and Mazarine interest, who have been either employed or retained upon former occasions, to apply at the Drapers Hall," where also "such of the rising generation who conceive themselves qualified to act in the *swearing line* are desired to make application, that their claims may be *scrutinized by proper persons*;" but threats came to nothing, and the Sheriffs, Messrs. Gibbons and Walker, published a copy of the poll book, in their own justification. So intensely bitter was the feeling raised, however, that it led to splits in the various political societies; there were seceders, and others asked to withdraw, whilst a wordy handbill warfare ensued.

During January, 1791, the question of improving and enlarging the centre of, and approaches to, Coventry was considered. The Commissioners (thirty-five in number) had formed a plan to widen St. John's Bridge and the Burgess, together with the construction of a new road from Greyfriars Gate to Smithford Street, and the pulling down of properties facing Smithford Street and Broadgate. Opposition arose on the ground that numbers would be turned out of their dwellings, and that Greyfriars Lane property would considerably deteriorate. It was proposed to build new premises for the tradesmen of Broadgate at the rear of their then premises, in order to make an open square. "In the name of common sense," asks an opponent to the scheme, "who will resort to their respective shops amidst the confusion of rattling tiles, falling bricks, and crushing timber? Certainly he must be either the Coroner or a Surgeon, for should such inhabitants be hardy enough to visit their shops in this situation, the consequence must be *broken bones* and *dead bodies*!" His fears were not realized, and the work, when done, formed a very great improvement to the Town.

Mr. Wilmot interested himself considerably on the question of offences committed in the East Indies, and he spoke in the House upon the impeachment of Warren Hastings.

"Aris's Birmingham Gazette," January 9th, 1792, contains the following—

"A NOBLE BIRTHDAY FETE.—The birthday of Mr. Eardley, son of Lord Eardley, who entered into his 21st year on Thursday last, having been deferred on account of the indisposition of Lady Eardley, was celebrated on Tuesday last among his Lordship's tenants and tradesmen, at his seat at Belvidere, in a manner that does the highest honour to his Lordship's hospitality. An ox, weighing 100 stone and upwards, was roasted whole on Lecson Heath, and 3,000 penny rolls, beside large bread, ordered on the occasion; 1,000 of the bakers at Woolwich, 1,000 at Crayford, and 1,000 at Erith. Twenty-one barrels of most excellent ale were placed on stands on the Heath for everyone to partake, and various other articles. The number of persons was very great, of which some guess may be formed when it is known that forty-three carriages, full of tradesmen and persons from London, were sent down at his Lordship's expense."

Neither was Coventry forgotten, for whilst Lord Eardley sent £10 as a Christmas box to such Freemen as were prisoners in the City Gaol, he forwarded £100 for those in his interest "to drink success to his heir." His Lordship gave a white marble font and steps to St. Michael's, Coventry, to commemorate the event, and presented an original picture of George III., by Sir Thomas Lawrence, P.R.A., which cost him £400, and of which several copies were afterwards made.

Remembering that the father of the present Lord Craven had found a candidate before time, some gentlemen of Coventry now applied to his mother to aid them in prospect of an election coming on. The Countess had long lived apart from her husband, and on his death in September, 1791, married Frederick, Margrave of Brandenburg, Anspach. In her "Memoirs," greatly as she "disliked politics, and thought them out of the province of a woman" (about which Charles Fox quarrelled with her), she tells that upon her return to England, "as wife of the Margrave of Anspach, I was not a little surprised to receive an offer from Coventry to name a Member in Parliament. My second son, Berkeley Craven, was then only fifteen years of age, and my son Keppel Craven only thirteen, and I had no son old enough to represent the City in Parliament. I answered that I was precluded from availing myself of their obliging offer, but for which I was as much obliged as if I had accepted it."

Whilst the French Revolution had its effect upon European affairs, the events which led up to the deposition of the Monarch were far from being well understood in this country, in spite of the expressed admiration of Charles Fox and his supporters. In July, 1791, the friends of Dr. Priestly proposed to celebrate the destruction of the Bastille on the 14th by a dinner at Birmingham, which led to those great excesses and riots which had to be quelled by the military. At this time the Dissenters meetings in Coventry were disturbed, whilst a mob waited until ten o'clock nightly to hear the news from Birmingham, "and," as the Rev. George Burder, Minister of West Orchard Chapel, records, "seemed only to want a leader to begin the work of destruction

amongst us ; indeed, it was suspected that some bad men of Coventry were the principal incendiaries at Birmingham." It was rumoured that Priestly had escaped from that town to Burder's house for shelter, and the Minister hastily packed his valuables, to be moved at a moment's notice if necessary, but the arrival of some soldiers in Coventry prevented any attempt, if indeed any was projected. Burder and his friends tried to collect evidence, and it would appear that the extraordinary cartoon, "The Devil amongst the Saints ; or, The Revenge and Journey to Hell," thereupon came out, as in it the Revs. Burder (of West Orchard), and Evans (of Little Heath, Foleshill), with the Deacons of the former Chapel (Messrs. Collett and Reader, senr.), together with two informers, are conspicuous. The Rev. Jonathan Evans appears in another cartoon of this time, and whilst kicking over the Church, is shown supporting the cap of liberty, in allusion to his tenets.

As the French Revolution advanced, England to some extent became tainted with the dangerous principles lurking under the creed of "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity," and some few Coventry people became touched with the infection ; but whilst seditious placards, Republican pamphlets, and inflammatory handbills were stuck upon the walls of Churches and houses, the great bulk of the people remained firmly attached to the Throne. The Church and Tory party were loyal, the Whigs and many Nonconformists equally so, but certain extreme men and some Dissenters were doubtful. Of 110 innkeepers and publicans in the Town, 106 signed a resolution expressing their attachment to the King and appreciation of the Constitution, declaring they would suffer none to hold societies or meetings in their houses, or to use any language tending to subvert the kingdom, without giving immediate warning to the Mayor, and they published the names of the four publicans who would not sign, by way of reproach. Their loyalty was equalled by "the people called Quakers," who likewise publicly expressed their "affectionate regard for King and Government," as did "the Protestant Dissenters of the Baptist denomination" and others. On the 13th December, a numerously-attended meeting of magistrates, clergy, gentry, and inhabitants was held at the County Hall, the Mayor (Mr. George Howlett) presiding, which declared its loyalty to the Crown.

Burke's pamphlet, "Reflections upon the French Revolution," had been well received by the Tories, and when Tom Paine afterwards published his "Rights of Man" in reply, he was prosecuted by the Government for his attack on the Constitution, and found guilty. This country was on the verge of a war with France, which the Republic declared against it in January, 1793, and on the 1st of that month, Paine's effigy was drawn in a cart to Cross Cheaping, Coventry, for execution, where, together with his work, and a portrait of Mr. Fox, having a halter round his neck, it was burnt ; a band playing "the Rogue's March," and the people singing "God save the King."

In 1793, the Coventry Park began to be enclosed, and laid out into meadows.

CHAPTER XLIX.

DISTRESS, DISCONTENT, AND DEAR BREAD.

George III., continued (1793 to 1796).

Threatened French invasion—Coventry Barracks established—Distress and discontent—Corresponding Society's meeting—Local address on the King's escape—"Seditious Meetings Bills"—A favourable local gathering—"County Hall" and "Corporation" petitions for the Bill—Well received and presented by the Members—The Mayor and the Member—"Thistle" petition—Its defects exposed—Both Members refuse to present it—How sent to London—Presented by Mr. Fox—Scarce corn and dear bread—Farmers greed—Seasonable action of Lord Warwick—Mob assemble at Coventry—Dispersed by soldiers—Prices—Sheep sent away—A troublesome regiment—"The Irishman's pad"—Lord Eardley's desires—Fears for his seat—His address—Wishes to be returned again—Christmas box to the Freeman—A "contrast between England and France."

DEAD of French invasion caused the Government in 1793 to purchase properties in various Midland towns for the erection of barracks for soldiers, and they paid £2,025 to Messrs. Gunmen and Buck, in 1794-8, for the Bull Inn at Coventry, with its frontage towards Smithford Street, and re-modelled the premises on the military plans of the times.

Discontent prevailed throughout the country, caused chiefly by bad trade, distress, and the high prices of provisions. Petitions for peace from many towns were presented in the House, and in autumn, 1795, considerable apprehensions were excited by large assemblages of people, convened by the Corresponding Society. On the 26th of October, 40,000 persons assembled at Copenhagen House, near the Metropolis (at which a Coventry deputation attended), who passed resolutions asking that the Bill lately introduced into the Commons for the prevention of political assemblies might be dismissed.

The scarcity of corn from the last bad harvest had almost caused a famine, and when His Majesty passed in his carriage on the way to the House to open it, cries were heard of "Peace! Bread! No Pitt! No war!" A pistol was fired, and stones thrown. In November following, the City Members presented an address from Coventry to His Majesty on his escape.

The greater part of the people, in spite of the troubles of the time, were extremely loyal, and two temporary Bills for "the safety and preservation of His Majesty's Government against treasonable and seditious practices and attempts," and for "more effectually preventing seditious meetings and assemblies," gave them ease against the

aspirations of the mob. The Mayor, Mr. John Williamson, an enterprising builder, called a meeting of the well-disposed inhabitants at the County Hall, and 2,460 Freemen signed a petition in favour of the Bills, and a similar petition was also prepared by the Corporation. The Mayor personally took the County Hall petition to London, and was received by Lord Eardley; but his Worship being extremely desirous of showing his loyalty, there were not wanting those to traduce his character, and say he was courting favour to gain Knighthood; thus in a humorous poetical romance, called "The Coalition of the Conspirators to the Freemen of Coventry," is the following speech of "Yellow Jack"—

"And now great Jack his silence broke,
For to his Lordship thus he spoke:
'You know I am quite staunch and true
Both to *myself*, my Lord, and you.
My friends who say I'm wise and witty
Have thrice made me Head of the City;
And sure, my Lord, these men are right
Who say I should be made a Knight.
My wife, too, sets her heart upon
Being dubb'd a Lady, and I, SIR JOHN,
The *Few* now viewed Jack with delight,
And said he should be made a Knight;
Gave him a tea-pot and a watch,
And other toys that Jack did catch."

Meanwhile, at the instigation of the Corresponding Society in London, a counter petition, as a handbill tells us, emanating from "that stinging alehouse called *the Thistle*, in *West Orchard*, Coventry, hereafter to be named *Copenhagen Street*," was prepared by the local Committee. It contained 2,807 names, and another bill remarks that "on the Lord's Day they entrapped a whole host of saints going to and from the Tabernacle in Copenhagen Street, and brought them over to their purpose." The Yellows scrutinized the names on this petition, and found whilst some had signed three or four times over, various signatures had been forged, and that numbers of women and children had signed it.

The Members twice voted for the passing of the Bills, but now the "Seditious" requested them to present their petitions to Parliament, and receiving no reply, sent an emissary to London with them. This is how the anonymous opposition scribe says the business was done—

"Who is the man to request the Members to present this *Humble and respectful petition*? At length up starts *Young Lucifer*, crack-brained as a maniac, garrulous as a Parrot, with head as full of brains as an empty gin bottle, and enthusiastically roars out, 'I AM HE!' Loud applauses!—Two pairs of greys and cockades—Turn the sharp corner—Whiz!—Holloa, Boys, Holloa!—There ye go—to Dunchurch—Slap bang!—no money—bad job—touched the Landlord for ten—Got to London—Snug—Petition scouted—flat—go to Fox—Tally ho!—Stay three days—Short of money—Mail Coach, outside—Ding dong—dreadfully cold—Saturday morning—half-past eight—Peeping Tom for ever!—And hang all backward bell ringing."

Lord Eardley presented the County Hall petition, and Mr. Wilmot that of the Corporation. They both refused to have anything to do with *the Thistle* petition, and

Mr. Fox presented it. The Bills were eventually passed by considerable majorities.

Corn was exceedingly scarce, and fetched a high price in Coventry Market, for many farmers, greedy for profits on a large scale, refused to bring in their grain. Lord Warwick, the new Lord-Lieutenant of Warwickshire, set an example to the landlords, and ordered his Steward to see his farmers personally, and advise them to take their corn to the markets of Warwick and Coventry. The Steward refused, knowing such a measure would render both his Lordship and himself unpopular, but Lord Warwick mounted his horse, and went round personally to his tenant farmers, informing them that as they held their lands at a low valuation, they *must* thrash out their corn and bring it to market at a reasonable price, or otherwise he would not renew their leases; whereupon a prompt compliance was given, and other landlords followed the example. At Coventry, in April, a mob assembled crying for "cheap bread," but were dispersed by Lord Feilding's Light Horse from the Barracks. The Mayor and Committee declared there was sufficient grain and cattle, and that they would sell wheat at seven shillings the strike, and mutton at fourpence per pound; whereupon, in anticipation, upwards of three thousand sheep were driven by the farmers, to London for sale, out of the neighbourhood. "Wheat rose to fourteen shillings, but fell to ten shillings; bread was two pound for sixpence." Meanwhile, Dragoons relieved the Light Horse at Coventry; they were chiefly Irishmen, and from their drilling in the Park, near the Warwick Road, gave the name "Irishman" to a path there. This regiment got to cross purposes with the Citizens, and threatening them, was ordered to Birmingham, where it was broken up through bad conduct.

Lord Eardley desired to retain the good wishes of his constituents at this trying period. Bad trade, heavy taxes, and dear bread were telling upon the people, but he hoped the Government would be able to secure a speedy and honourable peace, in order to improve matters before another election. He felt that the seats of himself and colleague were in danger through the firmness they had exhibited upon the Seditions Bill, and the influence of the bad times. On 25th December, writing from Broughton Castle, he expressed his desire to be again returned for the City in the next Parliament, and in order to alleviate distress, sent a New Year's present of three shillings each for every Freeman who would receive it. In spite of the black look-out at home, it is peculiar to find so curious a "contrast between England and France" as is contained in a local handbill of the year—

"In England we have a fleet that commands the seas, a brisk foreign trade, our finances in a flourishing state; and when the corn which is now upon the way from foreign countries arrives, there is not the least doubt but we shall have a large loaf, and everything else in plenty. In France there is no trade at all; bread at *three guineas a pound*, and everything else in proportion; *frogs and snails* their principal food, *scraps of paper* in place of money; their fleets shut up in their harbours by the English Navy, and their armies flying before the Austrians. How satisfactory for Old England, that from the present state of France we must soon have a peace highly honourable and advantageous, but not the immediate one upon the terms held out by the supporters of *French Principles*."

CHAPTER L.

AN OPPOSITION VICTORY.

George III., continued (1796).

Dissolution—Eardley and Wilmot decline to contest—Their after biographies—Mr. W. W. Bird again comes forward—With Mr. Nathaniel Jefferys—In "the Independent interest"—Writs received—Corporation candidates: Messrs. John Petrie and Mr. William Berners—Their address—Preparation to receive them—Opposition thereto—Meeting of the mobs—"Yellow Jack's defeat on St. John's Bridge"—Corporation candidates hasty arrival—At King's Head Inn—Mob refuse them hearing—"Order of Terror"—Commencement of polling—The "Blue" rally—Affrights Messrs. Petrie and Berners—They retire—The poll closed—Messrs. Bird and Jefferys elected—Costs of contest—Paid—Defeated candidates, and Members, retiring addresses—A stormy chairing—"A New Song."



ON 20th May, 1796, the Parliament dissolved, and a new one was summoned for the 12th July following, when Messrs. Eardley and Wilmot, to the surprise of the Corporation party, declined somewhat suddenly to again contest Coventry.

Mr. Wilmot, in 1804, resigned his Mastership in Chancery, and retired to Bruce Castle, Tottenham, through failing health, where he wrote the life of his father, Sir John Eardley Wilmot, Kt., late Lord Chief Justice of Common Pleas, and published, amongst other works, one entitled "Opinions and Judgments." He assumed the name of Eardley in the year 1812, and dying in 1815, was buried in the ancient Norman vault at Berkswell Church, Warwickshire. Lord Eardley was elected for Wallingford on 25th May, 1796. He was an enthusiastic Freemason, and became Provincial Grand Master of Cambridgeshire. His wife, Lady Mary, was an exceedingly beautiful woman. She died the 1st of March, 1790, aged 46, and was buried at Berkswell, where a "memorial of affection and sorrow is erected by her surviving husband," who outlived her some years, and was afterwards buried beside her. As his sons died before him, the Peerage ceased, whilst the greater part of old Sampson Gideon's wealth passed to his grand-daughter Selina (who in 1797 married Colonel John Walbanke Childers, of Cantley, Yorkshire), and her family.

Mr. William Wilberforce Bird again came forward, together with Mr. Nathaniel Jefferys, of Piccadilly, London, both in "the Independent interest." The writs were received, but the Corporation found the utmost difficulty in obtaining candidates. Whilst searching for them far and near, they besought the Freemen not to pledge

their votes, and finally secured the services of Messrs. John Petrie and William Berners ; who, on the 23rd May, published a joint address, expressing their regard for the principles of the "glorious and excellent Constitution," and their determination "to give support to that noble system of government which had rendered this happy country the admiration of the world," whilst promising to pay special attention to the private interest of the Freemen. "As they were both deeply engaged in the commercial concerns of the country" they looked forward to a speedy and lasting peace. It was made known that the Corporation candidates would enter the City at noon on the 26th, and that body distributed yellow cockades to such as would help to bring them in. Their mob rallied the Town with music playing, and the Civic banner and streamers displayed ; but the mob of Messrs. Bird and Jefferys assembled, and began to rally also. Both parties met at the bridge on the Burges, where the former got the worst of it, and lost their drums and streamers, and the Mayor and his friends had to suffer the indignity of a retreat, upon which the following appeared, entitled

"YELLOW JACK'S DEFEAT,

On St. John's Bridge, 26th of May, 1796.

"HUZZA!—Triumphant BLUES rejoice,
The City now approves your choice ;
Whilst Fame's loud clarion shall be heard
That sounds for JEFFERYS and BIRD.
Hail, hail, the day which broke your chains,
See victory now rewards your pains ;
May each brave HERO in the fight
O'erflow with joy this glorious night ;
And on that day, each circling year,
May every Blue with joy appear.
Corruption's Standard you have broke,
On *St. John's Bridge*, by one bold stroke ;
Where *Yellow-legs* and *Yellow Blues*
In hearty blows received their dues ;
And Jack the Mayor, in one short hour,
Prostrate fell, lost all his power.
The dastard wretch for mercy cries }
Beneath a waggon, as he lies }
Pelted with dirt by girls and boys. }
*Tom Sharp*¹ retreats quick in the rear,
Whilst fifty fumes expressed his fear ;
He saw the *brook*, just where he stood,
And plunged direct in *Sherbourne's* flood.
Poor Vale,² who saw *Tom's* active feat,
Now tried to make the same retreat ;
But looking back before he goes,
Received a blow upon the nose ;
Recoiling back, drops in the flood,
The stream was quickly ting'd with blood.
*Ewbank*³ with grief saw his friends fly,
And following them, he lost an eye ;
For as he turned his *Yellow* phiz,
A blow on cheek-bone fell full *whiz* ;
The *skull* was *thick*, or else the stroke
Had proved this skirmish not a joke.

Ratray,⁴ the young, who stood aloof,
 Of cowardice now gave strong proof:
 A sugar hogshead near him stood,
 In this he crept—excuse my pen—
 And stuck like badger in his den;
 A *wag* gave round the cask a chuck,
 And both rolled headlong in the brook.
 Alas! Poor *Charles*, vile was thy fate,
 But yet the truth I must relate:
 He fled, no need the place to name,
 A goddess covered him with shame.
 His quondam friends, who knew his face,
 Cried, 'Ah, my Lord, vile is thy case!'
 And *Monkey*, who with pride looked big,
 Had got *Ben Dix*⁵ to make a wig;
 This in the scuffle he now lost,
 And in the air the wig was tost.
 Then on a flag was fixed on high
 A Trophy of the Victory;
 The drums were broke, the streamers tore,
 And then the foes were seen no more."

The defeat of the Mayor's party caused trouble to the Yellows. Hastily the news of the disaster reached Mr. Edward Inge, the Town Clerk; he quickly sent a mounted messenger to stay the Corporation candidates arrival, and in the evening Messrs. Petrie and Berners were brought into the City at the gallop, whereat the author of the above ends his rhythm—

"The chaises now drove on full speed,
 Though from their fears they were not freed;
 But when they got to the King's Head,
 They hid themselves and went to bed."

The 27th was the show fair day. Business was suspended, and the procession did not take place. The Blue mob would not let the Corporation candidates be heard, many windows were smashed, a "reign of terror" ensued, and a handbill records—

"At the present momentous crisis, when Terror is the order of the Day, it is necessary every man should rally round the Standard of Liberty, and do his utmost to counteract the Designs of a base and ungenerous Enemy; the wretch that breaks your windows for daring to have an Opinion of your own, would also, *Butcher-like*, commit every Atrocity. That Men of Property and former Respectability should be seen, at the most silent Hour of the Night, like Wolves in Herds parading through the Streets, committing Outrages upon the property of their fellow Citizens, and throwing stones into the Rooms of peaceable inhabitants, is astonishing. Blush, fellow Citizens! Ye boasted Friends of Liberty, act consistently; and never, by the *Order of Terror*, endeavour to deprive others of that Liberty you wish to enjoy yourselves."

The poll commenced on Saturday, the 28th, and the four candidates were nominated. The Blues "breakfasted" early at various inns in their Wards, and rallying, proceeded to the booth, when their numbers so affrighted Messrs. Petrie and Berners that they sent a letter to Messrs. Bird and Jefferys withdrawing from the poll, which, after a few votes had been recorded for Bird and Jefferys, was closed without the possibility of their

¹ Mr. Thomas Sharp, the antiquary.

² Samuel Vale, Esq., Alderman, and watch manufacturer.

³ Thomas Ewbank, a lawyer.

⁴ David Ratray, M.D.

⁵ Benjamin Dix, a barber.

opponents offering further resistance. Petrie and Berners, in taking leave of their supporters, in a handbill allude to the opposition against their entry into the City, and whilst unable to express their feelings for those "so inhumanly beaten and cruelly treated" in their cause, consider they would be "highly culpable to persevere in a contest which would inevitably destroy the peace of the City;" they therefore retired. As Petrie and Berners had their London Freemen down, their expenses were considerable, but they paid their debts with honour. It is said Mr. Jefferys spent £6,000 over the election. The Sheriffs returned

MR. WILLIAM WILBERFORCE BIRD AND MR. NATHANIEL JEFFERYS, who, whilst they promised to give their endeavours to restore peace, and to reduce the high price of corn, promised aid to promote any measure that would increase the comfort of the industrious poor.

The procession at the Chaining on the 31st was as brilliant as the weather (which was very stormy) would allow, and at its conclusion, a most terrific hailstorm upset the harmony of the proceedings. The following appeared—

"A New Song wrote for the Blue Club, in the Third Year of *Yellow Jack's* Mayoralty.
By Dr. Lash'em, to the Tune of 'The Dumpling Days of Good Queen Bess.'

Let the demon of discord be drove far away,
Whilst unity triumphs on this jovial day;
May you ever be merry, so long as you're true,
And despair seize the wretch who comes here not a Blue.
This City long time has been pestered with knaves,
Who nursed famed TOM WHITE, for to make you all slaves;
They feasted, got drunk, clothed their backs, it is known,
But can they with TRUTH say 'twas *justly* their own?

CHORUS—*Botheration seize the rascals in the nation,
Not forgetting Yellow Jack and the Corporation.*

With cash thus procured they corrupt all their tools,
And to Parliament send two weak-headed fools,
Who perched in the Senate like owls in the dark,
And when Trade was the subject, ne'er made one remark.
But no more through this City shall folly thus pass,
Nor *St. Stephen's* disgraced by a Jew and an ass;
E'en *Petrie* and *Berners* through fear ran away,
And left BIRD and JEFFERYS triumphant to-day.

CHORUS—*Botheration seize the rascals of the nation,
Not forgetting Yellow Jack and the Corporation."*



CHAPTER LI.

MEMBERS ACTIONS AND SPEECHES.

George III., continued (1796 to 1799).

Biography of Mr. N. Jefferys—His dealings with the Prince of Wales—Anecdote of Sheridan—Mr. Jefferys maiden speech—Members vote with the minority—Stopping supplies—Local bankers—Mr. Bird's Small Notes Bill—Mr. Jefferys speeches—Mr. Bird and apprentice indenture stamps, Watch and Clock Bill, and increased taxes—A Coventry petition—Mr. Bird and the appointment of Local Land Tax Commissioners—Mr. Inge's reply in "The Mercury"—The Members vote against the Union—Mr. Bird's speech thereon—His Bill for Coventry ribbon weavers wages—Rejected by the Lords.

NATHANIEL JEFFERYS, Esq., was the son of Mr. Jefferys, a cutler, of the Strand, London. He served an apprenticeship to an uncle in Cockspur Street, and commenced business for himself at the corner of Dover Street, Piccadilly, as a jeweller and goldsmith, married, and had a family. Trade increased, and amongst his patrons was George, Prince of Wales. Jefferys supplied the costly wedding presents for His Royal Highness's marriage with Princess Caroline of Brunswick, and made various loans to the Prince of considerable magnitude. The account remained outstanding for a considerable period. "Having in 1796 received £24,000 upon it, Mr. Jefferys retired from business upon a supposed capital of £40,000, and an elegant house in Hertford Street, Mayfair, and another in the Isle of Thanet," whereupon a writer says: "The moment His Royal Highness smiled on him, Jefferys neglected his shop for Carlton House, and increased in altitude two feet—at least, he became tall enough to look over the heads of his former friends and companions. It is a known fact that Mr. Jefferys took every opportunity of throwing himself in the way of the Prince for Royal notice, and many persons have observed *he got tall and thin* as he became the Prince's *shadow*. To gratify ambition, he became a candidate for Coventry." Mr. Jefferys was a bold speaker, but unequal to sustain debate, he had been induced to stand for Coventry by his friend, Richard B. Sheridan, and although considered rich by the many, a few knew otherwise. The impecunious and brilliant Sheridan had received many favours from one Wright, a bailiff, who kept a fashionable house in Carey Street; and Wright, in return, desired the afterward Treasurer of the Navy to procure a place for his son from Secretary Dundas, whereupon "Old Shery" solicited the Minister for the appointment, saying: "I am come, Sir, to ask a favour of you; for whilst Pitt and you live, by heavens!

you will keep all the good things to yourselves. Will you, then, give me something for the son of a bailiff, to whom I owe *infinite obligations?*" The Secretary granted the singular request with a hearty laugh, and the youth was sent out to a handsome situation in Ceylon, where, after four years, he died in receipt of three thousand a year. Sheridan told Wright he did not want his thanks; "You are welcome," said he, "but you shall give me a dinner for this, and we'll dine at *Carey Castle*." The bailiff asked Mr. Jefferys, with other gentlemen well known for the emptiness of their purses, and they all spent a very jovial day; but before leaving, Sheridan, with a look of ridiculous solemnity, said: "Gentlemen, let us keep this meeting a most profound secret, for if Mr. Pitt hears of it, he will say that Wright has, *with a view to some fresh political movement, entertained all the monied interest of the kingdom.*"

Mr. Jefferys made his maiden speech in the House on 2nd November, upon the Bill for augmenting the Cavalry. In December, both Coventry Members voted for Fox's censure upon Ministers, only to find themselves in the minority.

The Government had, in spite of the enormous taxation, largely overdrawn its account with the Bank of England, and the Bank refused to comply with Pitt's further demand of a loan for Ireland. In February, 1797, the bankers and manufacturers of Coventry, with other towns, experienced difficulty in carrying on their business and answering the many demands to which they were exposed during the then depressed times through the great scarcity of coin. The local bankers were, Little and Woodcock; Wyatt and Beck; Lamb, Eagle and Bunney; Troughton, Newcombe and Troughton; and Bird, Bagshaw and Pearman. Paper money was made a legal tender, and the Bank of England contemplated issuing small notes instead of guineas. Mr. Bird took the matter in hand, and pointed out that the laws prohibited the issuing of small promissory notes, and that business could not be carried on in the country under the temporary pressure if the Acts were to be complied with. He desired to temporarily suspend their operation, and to allow the issue of promissory notes for a limited time as if such laws were not in existence. The matter received considerable debate, and on the 2nd of March Mr. Bird brought up his Small Notes Bill. The Commons passed it, and the Lords agreed to the measure, after striking out the word "negotiable." The Bill was renewed, with amendments, from time to time until 1819. In March, Mr. Jefferys spoke upon the Quaker Relief Bill, and the questions of the Royal marriage, and the mutiny at the Nore. Mr. Bird proposed an exception in the Stamp Duty Bill favourable to longer apprenticeship indentures, and did not approve of taxing any right of the franchise. In July, Mr. Bird, finding the Watch and Clock Duty Bill would be highly injurious to the interest of his constituents, opposed it. Both Members opposed the Bill for trebling the assessed taxes in December, and Mr. Bird declared that the Coventry watch trade had been almost annihilated by the imposts of the preceding year.

On the 11th January, 1798, Mr. Bird presented a Coventry petition asking for the repeal of an Act imposing a duty on watches. On the 4th of April, the Member complained to the House of the many contemptible persons who had been appointed Commissioners for collecting the Land Tax in Coventry, and stated that the Commission was composed of such low and mean characters as must bring a disgrace upon the laws, which for some sinister purpose had been placed in their hands to dispense. Amongst the number were persons who were colliers, scavengers, watchmen, cats-meat dealers, lamplighters, fiddlers, nine servants of the Corporation, and two idiots, together with a turnpike keeper and a shoeblack. He asked whether such persons were proper for administrating, and desired to be allowed to bring in a supplemental Bill for Coventry. Mr. Inge, Clerk to the Commissioners, replied to Mr. Bird's charges through "the Mercury," saying that all those chosen were Freemen, and it appeared strange that the worthy Member should suppose that persons of the description were competent to elect him a Senator, yet incompetent to deal with the collection of the taxes. Usually the Members went with the Opposition, but on the 20th April they voted with the Ministers for the suspension and extension of the Habeas Corpus Act.

In February, 1799, Bird and Jefferys voted against the Government on the question of the proposed Union of the House of Commons with the Irish Parliament. In the debate, Mr. Bird spoke as "the representative of a manufacturing town, whose particular interest might be materially affected." Mr. Douglas, one of the Lord Commissioners of the Treasury, replied that "with respect to the fear which the Honourable Member for Coventry might entertain for his constituents, he thought that the plan, if passed, would occasion such joy and produce such a consumption of the manufactures of that City as to make the fortunes of the manufacturers." Mr. Bird, in reply, said "he believed the manufacturers were better judges of their own interests than the honourable gentleman. He never had said that the plan might not be eventually good for the country, but he thought the resolutions went further than was necessary, for they tied England hand and foot, and laid her at the mercy of the Irish Parliament."

On 27th May, Mr. Bird introduced "a Bill for regulating the wages and price of work of manufacturers employed in the manufactory of ribbon in the City and County of Coventry." It was read a second time on the 31st, but on the 11th of July the Coventry Ribbon Weavers Wages Bill was rejected by the Lords on the question for the third reading.



CHAPTER LII.

ACT FOR THE RELIEF AND EMPLOYMENT OF THE POOR.

George III., continued (1800 to 1801).

Members votes—Loyal opposition meetings—Silk weavers petition—First Parliament of Great Britain and Ireland—Mr. Pitt's resignation—The Addington Ministry—State of the times—The Poor Rates—Proposal to start a House of Industry—Petitions and counter petitions—Mr. Bird's speech against the Bill—Mr. Jefferys speech for same—Bill passed—Its title—Census.

STILL the Members voted with the minority, and on 17th February, 1800, Mr. Bird spoke upon the scarcity of corn. On the 19th of May, he called a meeting at Coventry, with a view to the preparing of an address to His Majesty on his escape when fired at on the Thursday before, which memorial was unanimously agreed upon ; but the Body Corporate, aggrieved at his action, called another meeting, whereat their address was coolly received. On the 23rd, Mr. Bird presented a petition from the silk manufacturers and weavers of Coventry, praying that a higher duty than proposed should be laid upon imported silk from Ireland, which was referred to a Committee. Parliament was now discussing the union of English and Irish Parliaments, and the Members then sitting on the part of England became Members of the first Parliament of Great Britain and Ireland, which met 22nd January, 1801. In February, Mr. Pitt resigned, and the Addington Ministry was formed.

On the 17th of February, Mr. Bird spoke upon the Brown Bread Bill, the repeal of which was moved. In the diary of a Coventry family is the following state of the times : "February 23 ; the Coarse, or Bran Bread Bill, was laid aside, and wheaten bread sold again at 2 lbs. 8 ozs. for a shilling. On March 2 ; bread about 2 lbs. 4 ozs. for a shilling, mutton and beef 9d. a pound, pork 10d., potatoes 8d. a gallon, rice 6d. a pound. Trade very bad, and the Poor Rates twenty shillings in the pound. Tradespeople breaking daily, and the poor starving for want." "In July, through the great distress by the loss of trade and dearness of provisions, the Poor Rates the last year amounted to about twenty shillings in the pound, which brought such heavy charge on the payers as ruined many." In order to remedy the evil, "the gentry" in the Town met, and agreed to obtain "an Act to unite both Parishes into one, and to build a House of Industry for the better employment of the poor," when accordingly, both Mr. Bird and Mr. Jefferys presented petitions in favour ; and on the 18th of March, the latter obtained permission to bring in a Bill for the purpose. On the 1st of May, Mr. Jefferys presented petitions from the Mayor and Corporation of Coventry, and other bodies, desiring the Bill might become law ; but in the meantime Mr. Bird, finding a great

part of the poorer inhabitants opposed to it, turned tail, and presented counter petitions from a number of Coventry and London Freemen. On the second reading, Mr. Bird attempted to show that the Act was inexpedient, and calculated to serve no important end.

"He particularly alluded to the number of those who signed for the Bill, which he stated to be about thirty-three, who, although highly respectable individuals, were not sufficiently numerous to influence the decision of the House. With this he contrasted the number of those signing the petitions presented against the Bill, which he stated to be upwards of three hundred, and contended that their sentiments ought to have great weight. He suggested that the Bill had a tendency to throw too much influence into the hands of a few individuals, and concluded by moving that the Bill be read that day six months.

"Mr. Jefferys rose to oppose the local knowledge of his hon. friend and colleague, but being desired by a very considerable number of the inhabitants of the first respectability to support the measure, he had endeavoured to supply the want of local information by gentlemen well informed upon the subject, and he believed the measure necessary, not only to the relief, but to the very existence of Coventry. The Poor Rates had increased to such an amount that could scarcely be borne, and if this mode or some other could not be levied, the people of Coventry must apply to Parliament to give them support. No employment was given to the out poor in general, whilst that given in the Workhouses was inconsiderable, and the profits arising from their labour very small. Notwithstanding the small proportion of the poor in the Workhouses, they were so deficient of room that part sat up whilst the others slept, and six, seven, and eight children were obliged to lie in one bed. The surgeon who attended one of the Workhouses (there were two, one in Hill Street and one in Well Street) said that unless many of them were removed, an epidemic fever must be the consequence. In the other Workhouse an alarming fever had already prevailed, on account of its crowded state, which extended to almost every individual in it. The progressive increase of the rates and the miserable condition of the poor principally arose from the present bad system and management. It was proposed by the plan of the House of Industry that the poor should, by the exercise of their talents and labour, contribute to their own support, and by that means relieve the oppressive burdens of the rates, and keep themselves out of the destructive habits of idleness and beggary. The measure had been stated to have been a job, which he did not conceive could be applied to it in any degree, every circumstance attending the accounts being subject to the decision of the Board. It was intended to give employment to persons applying for relief in the occupation of the several trades they had been accustomed to, which he conceived could in no degree be termed a monopoly of the manufactory of the place. His hon. friend and colleague had alluded to the several petitions he had presented, amongst which he had omitted to notice one praying for leave to bring in this Bill. In consequence of his hon. friend's declining to go on with the measure, he had taken it up independent of all party considerations, considering it to be an object of the very greatest importance to the City he had the honour to represent, and that in so doing he was stimulated by no desire to court popularity with one party or to fear the loss of it with another. Had his hon. friend gone on with the Bill which he at first brought in, he would have been very happy to have supported the measure, having no ambition, by appearing as a principal, to place himself in a forward or conspicuous situation in the business of the House.

"On a division taking place, there were—For the second reading 84, against it 21, majority for 63."

Both Members were placed upon the Committee. Mr. Jefferys was Chairman, and Mr. Bird obtained a clause, whereby, in case silk goods were made by the inmates, they were not to be manufactured "otherwise than for hire only, and at the usual and accustomed prices." The objections being over-ruled, the Bill soon came into force, when the old Monastic buildings of the White Friars on the London Road were purchased, and considerably added to. The Bill was entitled, "An Act for the better relief and support of the poor in the several Parishes of St. Michael and Holy Trinity, in the City of Coventry and County of the said City, and for exempting the Vicars of the said Parishes from being rated to the relief of the poor in respect to certain assessments."

By a census now taken, Coventry contained 2,930 houses, and 16,049 inhabitants, and the County of the City 5,547 inhabitants.

CHAPTER LIII.

"OH RARE JEFFERYS AND BARLOW."

George III., continued (1801 to 1802).

Mr. Jefferys proposes to retire—His popularity with Corporation and Drapers Company—"The Bastille"—Mr. Peter Moore—Brought by Mr. Bird—His India trade proposal—Tewkesbury elections—A case at Gloucester Assizes—Prince of Wales debts—Mr. Jefferys the largest creditor—Defends his action in House—Peace celebration—A Blue treat—Mr. Bird in Parliament—Overtures to Prince of Wales and Sir Robert Peel—Corporation and Drapers join interests—"Lost"—Account of the Company—Canvass of Bird and Moore—A mimic address—Support of London Freemen—Treats and free fights—Colonel Brooke's arrival—Opposition mob surround King's Head Inn—"Brooke's retreat"—Captain F. W. Barlow accepted by the Corporation and Drapers—Mr. Jefferys also accepted—Bird and Moore's triumphant entry—The Blues and their publicans—Mr. Jefferys threatened—Opposition mob await his arrival—How he entered Coventry—Destruction at the White Bear Inn—Eight days polling—Bird and Moore have the show of hands—An epigram—"Arrangements" at the poll booth—Out voters—Tom Arnold and his Freemen—"Oh Rare Jefferys and Barlow"—Party headquarters and dinners—Treating—"Turn again, Whittington"—Close of poll—Messrs. Jefferys and Barlow elected—The Chairing—A customary gift—Chairing Song—A parody upon it—The band of the 1st Dragoons engaged in the procession—Meeting with the Blue mob—Great disturbance—A mock Chairing—"The Member for Radford"—Mob's return—Rioting—Military called out—Correspondence with War Office.



R. JEFFERYS business affairs were so involved that he could not afford the expense of a contested election, especially as Mr. Bird proposed to bring forward a candidate to oppose him. He was popular with the Corporation and Drapers Company through the part he had taken in obtaining the "Directors Act," but disliked by a large portion of the lower classes in Coventry, who did not approve of the poor working for a living within the new Workhouse, which they christened "the Bastille."

On the 7th of December, an address was issued to the Freemen by Mr. Peter Moore, of Great George Street, Westminster. He was brought to Coventry by Mr. Bird, and "the Mercury" declared he was "the gentleman that brings forward at the India House the plan for opening the trade to the East Indies; such a measure must be of great benefit in the manufacture of this City, if carried, by introducing Bengal raw silks upon cheap terms." Mr. Moore had twice unsuccessfully contested Tewkesbury, and petitioned against the sitting Members return, but the Committee of the House declared

them elected, and that his petition was both frivolous and vexatious. His credentials were not improved by a case tried before Lord Kenyon at the Gloucester August Assizes, in 1797, wherein the landlord of the Hop Pole Inn at Tewkesbury sought to recover £300 for the entertainment of Mr. Moore and his friends at the election from that gentleman. The Judge found the bill exceedingly reasonable, and strongly condemned Mr. Moore and the other candidate. "What," he said, "Mr. Moore could see in his colleague to take him under his protection and to frank his election, he could not tell; but having been so lovingly together, he would not separate them; and directed the Jury to find a verdict for the innkeeper."

The debts of the Prince of Wales had occupied a considerable time of the legislature since 1787. The Prince became deeply involved, and Mr. N. Jefferys was one of his creditors. His first loan to the Prince was made about 1780, and the account had advanced to £85,028; but the Commissioners for the management of His Royal Highness's affairs deducted a large sum, which placed Mr. Jefferys in an embarrassed position, and on the 31st of March, 1802, he defended his claims in the House.

After nine years war with France, the hollow Peace of Amiens was signed on the 25th of March, and was celebrated at Coventry on Easter Monday, April 26th. On the day following, Messrs. Bird and Moore gave a treat to their friends. On the 4th of May, Mr. Bird endeavoured to get the provisions of a Bill affecting the health of certain persons employed in the cotton mills and trades, extended to the silk manufacture.

Mr. Jefferys made overtures to the Prince of Wales to name a candidate for Coventry. They were declined, and some of the chief inhabitants invited Sir Robert Peel to contest the City, whereupon "A new song" says of those it calls "the House of Industry schemers"—

"They thought Sir Robert Peel would go and take with him his cotton,
With work the *parish gaol* to fill for each poor man that's got in."

The Baronet declined, but sent £100 towards Mr. Jeffery's expenses.

Meanwhile, to the no small concern of the Blues, the Drapers Company, who had hitherto been their friends, joined the Corporation, and a curious handbill, in denoting the fact, says—

"LOST!

O YES! O YES! O YES!

THIS IS TO GIVE NOTICE.

To all persons whom it may concern, and therefore pray pay attention and hear the woeful tale!

DESERTED and STRAYED from the Place where, in the days of its credit, it used to be laid—
THE SEAL of the DRAPERS COMPANY.

The last time it was seen or heard of was sometime on Thursday last, upon the SCOUT towards LONDON, in the company with another SEAL, well known to be an *old offender*, both in character and connections. Whoever will apprehend the said SEAL, so that it may be brought to Justice, shall, upon conviction or *Penitence*, be rewarded according to his deserts; but the last impression taken therefrom is not conceived to be PROOF, and consequently of little or no value.

Coventry, May 3rd, 1802."

The Drapers Company consisted of eighteen members, a Master, and two Wardens. It had originally been incorporated for the furtherance of trade, but the original object of the Charter was gone. It had an annual revenue of about £100, and the members individually, if not as a body, possessed considerable interest amongst the poorer Freemen. They had hitherto been in opposition to the Corporation, and "this unnatural combination" exasperated the Independent, or "Dark Blue" candidates, whose Committee met daily at Mr. Bird's house, in Little Park Street; whilst a canvass of the Town was commenced, and, attended by a crowd carrying the Mazarine Ward flags, Messrs. Bird and Moore proceeded from house to house. Mr. Bird printed his address on the 8th, and his opponents issued a mimic one, having considerable humour displayed, which has an allusion to his ragged following—

"I have no time now to give you all my advice, but desire you will not follow me about, unless you put on your best clothes, as the appearance you made last night reminded me of 'a black, shirtless rabble.' Dear friends, excuse me—dinner waits. Farewell.

WILL BY FORCE



Two hundred and fifty of the Coventry Freemen in London held a meeting at the Hoxton Coffee House. They signed an address promising Mr. Jefferys their support, and desiring his nomination. Those voters favourable to Bird and Moore met at the Red Lion, Phoenix Street, Spitalfields, and passed a similar resolution to their candidates. Their Chairman, Robert Moy, alluding to the actions of Bird, Jefferys, and others, with reference to the erecting of the House of Industry, praises the former, declaring that "the poor only were indebted to him for beneficial alterations in the Bill, and believing that on the present occasion they will evince their gratitude by supporting the man who, although failing to destroy the serpent, endeavoured (as he promised) to rob it of its sting."

Mr. Bird's exertions for the repeal of the Watch Tax gave him many supporters. On the 10th, the Corporation gave a treat to their Freemen, which was followed on the 17th by one given by gentlemen of the Drapers Company, and another by Bird and Moore. At ten o'clock in the evening the parties met in Gosford Street, and a violent *mêlée* occurred.

The Corporation party solicited Colonel Brooke, the officer commanding at Birmingham, to become their candidate. He arrived at the King's Head Inn, Coventry, early on Saturday, previous to the election, and had an interview with his friends, but the news of his arrival was the signal for the Blue mob to assemble, and

about a thousand of them surrounded the house, and kept the gallant officer prisoner. Deterred by this reception, and not able to have further access to his friends, he left the Town without becoming a candidate; but Captain Francis W. Barlow, an officer of the 4th Dragoon Guards, having a considerable estate at Middlethorpe, near York, and a Magistrate of that County, who was staying at the Hotel, being made of stouter stuff, declared "that if the Colonel resigned, he'd be hanged if he himself wouldn't come forward, for he didn't care a button for the threats of an opposition mob." He quickly came to terms with the Corporation, and was joyously accepted both by them and the Drapers. It was now given out that Mr. Jefferys had been induced to stand again, and an opponent's view of the Corporation candidates is thus recorded—

"What is their choice? a boy without a beard,
Who knows no more of commerce than his sword;
The other, *Bankrupt* both in faith and trade,
A shipwreck of all principle."

Parliament had been dissolved, and a new one called for August 31st, 1802. On the 1st July, Bird and Moore made a triumphant entry into the Town. They were met by their party on Whitley Common; the horses taken from the carriages, and amidst a vast concourse of people they were drawn into the City. By giving out their determination to spend no money at the public-houses, they disheartened some few. Here is a specimen squib upon the matter, entitled "A Dialogue between a Freeman and Dear Charley." The *Abstract* from the Act, against treating, is alluded to.

"FREEMAN—No bread, no cheese, no meat, no beer—
Hang it, Charles, it makes me queer;
I've shouted till my throat is sore,
With BIRD I've done, I'll shout no MOORE.

CHARLEY—You shout no MOORE! You must, I tell 'e!
Will not the *Abstract* fill your belly?
Our BIRD, you know, has got his quills,
And PETER ne'er would pay his bills!
Mind not yourself, but be content
To starve by Act of Parliament."

The Corporation now prevailed upon Mr. Jefferys to come forward, and a subscription was entered into. There was a large Blue mob awaiting his arrival at Much Park Street, Coventry, on his coming from London, which declared there should be no opposition; and threatened to put the unfortunate gentleman into "the Bastille." He, however, slipped into the City another way, and by the help of a friendly rally, reached the White Bear Inn, the gates were immediately closed, but the infuriated opposition mob followed, and smashing doors and windows, broke into the Inn; menaced Mr. Grimes, the landlord, destroyed the furniture, and threatened Mr. Jefferys life; but eventually the constables cleared the place. Jefferys and Barlow's addresses were issued on the 5th.

The poll commenced on the 8th of July, and lasted eight days. Bird and Moore gained the show of hands at the hustings, and Mr. Carter, junior, demanded a poll, in writing, for Jefferys and Barlow. It was objected that he was Under-Sheriff, but he declared he was not, and made the demand as a Freeman. The poll went on, amidst excitement, each side equally sure of winning. A handbill says—

"Some swear by the gods,
They will venture long odds,
That Bird is returned without trouble;
But ere the poll's o'er,
BIRD will fly with one MOORE,
And prove that *Pretension's* a bubble."

The booth was in Cross Cheaping, and the Freemen came to poll through a lane, or way made by the crowd to it; they polled by tallies. The voting was open, and the Freemen were thanked by the candidates or their agents. An Alderman stood on one side of this lane in the "Corporation interest," and one of the "Independent" gentlemen on the other, and when undue influence was used, the "Assessor" declared that "if the Alderman condescended to take upon himself the office of blackguard, he could not help it;" and indeed, the Sheriffs, Messrs. Skears Rew and Vale Whitwell, had a rough time of it.

The out-voters now amounted to about 760, and numbers, as usual, came long distances. Bird and Moore somewhat neglected the Londoners, which aided their opponents. When, near the close of the election, a Blue mob waited upon the London Road for their opponents coach and out-voters, with the intention of staying their progress until all was over; Arnold, the coachman, slipped down a side lane, and entered the City quietly with his load of Freemen, who promptly recorded their votes; an achievement which; aided by the drum and fife bands of the old Charity Schools in the Town, has been rendered popular in the favourite tune and words, yet heard at election times in Coventry, of—

"Oh Rare Jefferys and Barlow!
Oh Rare Jefferys and Barlow!
Down Folly Lane,
Tom Arnold he came,
To vote for Jefferys and Barlow."

Bird and Moore's headquarters were at Mr. Bird's house, in Little Park Street. Mr. Jefferys stayed at the White Bear, and Captain Barlow at the King's Head, the latter gentlemen dining with their friends alternately at either daily. There were open, and partially open, houses at this election, where food and liquor could be had by various partizans. "We had," says Shaw, the Dunchurch publican, in his evidence on the petition, in speaking of the Fleur-de-Lis Inn, "pickled salmon, roast beef, boiled beef, ale, punch, and brandy; all upon the table at the same time." As the poll neared its end, the following appeared—

" 'Turn again, Whittington,'
 Turn about, fair play;
 Bird and Moore are almost done,
 Nor will they long stay.

Now all the cash is gone,
 The *Bank* is drained;
 Paper must instead be shown,
 Each nerve is strained.

They have already tried
 To *poll twice over*;
Pauper and *dead* beside
 Are laid in clover.

What will poor Peter do
 When he's defeated?
 Let him to Tewkesbury go,
 And there be treated.

No more shall 'Whittington'
 Ring from St. Michael's;
 Soon shall we hear 'dead and gone'—
 Bird and Moore, farewell."

When the poll closed, 2,369 Freemen had voted, and according to "the copy of the poll" issued, the numbers stood—

| | | | |
|--------------------------------|-----|-----|------|
| F. W. Barlow ... | ... | ... | 1197 |
| N. Jefferys ... | ... | ... | 1190 |
| W. W. Bird ... | ... | ... | 1182 |
| P. Moore ... | ... | ... | 1152 |
| Majority in favour of Barlow | | | 15 |
| Majority in favour of Jefferys | | | 8 |

And on 17th July, the Sheriffs returned

FRANCIS WILLIAM BARLOW, ESQ., AND NATHANIEL JEFFERYS, ESQ.

On the 23rd, the chairing took place. It was a very expensive affair, and a great profusion of yellow ribbons was used. There was no general dinner, but the customary five shillings each was given by the victors to such as wished it. The following "Song for the Chairing of N. Jefferys and F. W. Barlow, Esqrs.," to the tune, "See the Conquering Hero comes," appeared—

" See the conquering heroes come!
 Raise your voices, beat the drum:
Sons of Freedom, hail the day,
Independence bears the sway.

See your Members in the chair;
 Hoist your streamers, rend the air:
Sons of Freedom, hail the day,
Independence bears the sway.

Peace and harmony unite,
 We've preserved our ancient right:
Sons of Freedom, hail the day,
Independence bears the sway."

This seems to have annoyed the opposition party, for Mr. J. Turner, the printer, issued a counter-blast called "A Rhapsody on the Chairing Song," by way of reply.

The Military Band of the 1st Dragoons, quartered in the Coventry Barracks, consisting of sixteen privates, had been requisitioned for the Chairing, and other privates led their horses. When the procession was in Spon Street, a large Blue mob met them, and in a scuffle the chair of Mr. Jefferys was soon surrounded. Stones were thrown in all directions, and such violence used that the Magistrates requested that a detachment from the barracks should be in readiness to restore the City's peace, if necessary. The Blues attempted to dismount a bandsman, which brought the privates leading the horses into collision; but matters were at length quieted. In the afternoon, a number of Bird and Moore's partizans met and dined at Radford, situate a mile north of the City, where they had a mock election, and declared the result thus—

"RADFORD ELECTION.

| | | | |
|--|-----|-----|-----|
| Thomas Sammons, Esq. (Cobbler) ... | ... | ... | 66 |
| Peter Camomile, Esq. (Dr. Vernon) ... | ... | ... | 12 |
| Thomas Would-be Alderman (Mr. Hookham) ... | ... | ... | 2." |

Sammons was a parish pauper, and his mock chairing was attended by about a thousand persons. A handbill asks—

"Friends and neighbours, all attend
At Keresley's merry chairing,
When we to *British Commons* send
Our Member; oh, what staring!
And Sammon's name shall greeted be
With loud huzzas and three times three."

This mob returned to Coventry about seven o'clock, preceded by drums and fifes, and insulted and beat various persons wearing their opponents colours. They assaulted a soldier at the Market Place, and played "the Rogues March" in front of the barracks. Several privates standing near the gates were ill used, but their comrades from the barracks, and some of Jefferys and Barlow's men, took their part, and considerable confusion ensued. Mr. John Williamson, the late Chief Magistrate, in endeavouring to quell the disturbance, was seriously hurt, and ordered out a small detachment of the military, whereupon the mob quickly dispersed, the soldiers parading the streets for some hours.

The matter was reported by Bird and Moore's friends to the War Office, and Mr. Mullis, the Mayor, defended his party's case and the officers who took part in the proceedings.



CHAPTER LIV.

A PETITION AND ITS RESULTS.

George III., continued (1802-3).

Bird and Moore's petition—Its allegations—A second petition—Mr. Jefferys qualification to sit challenged—Threatened unseating of Members—Accusations against the Corporation—Scene at Westminster—A Committee appointed to enquire—Lawyers agents and witnesses—Turner's publication of "the whole evidence"—Report of the trial—Witnesses—Evidence—Resolutions—Final determination of Committee—Mr. Jefferys unseated—Mr. Barlow declared duly elected—Petitions and objections not frivolous or vexatious.

BIRD and Moore petitioned the House against the return of Jefferys and Barlow. Their petition claimed to have a majority of legal votes, and that they ought to have been returned at the late election ; that divers unqualified persons voted for their opponents, whilst others (their own Freemen) were rejected ; that Jefferys and Barlow and their agents were guilty of notorious bribery and corruption, by giving and promising money and other rewards to voters in order to procure their election ; and that in order to secure it, they corruptly allowed money, meat, drink, and entertainment to voters, contrary to the Statute ; that many Freemen withheld their votes from the petitioners, by reason of gifts and loans, or promises thereof, being given or made to them by their opponents, their agents, or friends ; whilst others, through threats, intimidation, and corruption, were induced to do the like. They therefore prayed redress.

A second petition, signed by Thomas Mills, Thomas Morris, George Griffin, and James Hoggins, followed. It not only accused Jefferys and Barlow of bribery and treating, to the prejudice of their rights, and prayed for relief, but charged the Sheriffs of partiality in taking votes, and declared that at neither the time of election, or of taking the seat, was Mr. Jefferys qualified to sit as a Member. They accuse the Mayor, Bailiffs and Commonalty, whilst acting as avowed agents of Jefferys and Barlow, of the illegal disposal of White's and Wheatley's Charity in order to secure their candidates return, and declare that Bird and Moore were duly elected, and ought to have been returned.

The scene shifted to Westminster, to be fought before a Committee of the House, where Parliamentary agents attended, and silver-tongued counsel had large fees with their briefs, whilst agents tried in the waiting rooms to "earwig" hostile witnesses, who, judiciously guarded against "interruption" by friends, were well paid for their

evidence, and "lived like fighting cocks whilst in the Metropolis." Turner, the printer, of High Street, Coventry, published "The Whole of the Evidence on the Trial of the Petition," and the following condensed report appeared—

"When the Coventry Election Committee assembled on 28th February, Mr. Francis Dickens was chosen Chairman, and the petitions against Messrs. Jeffery and Barlow were read. Mr. Pigott opened the case, and Mr. Jefferys signed qualification, dated 20th December, was considered. It stated that he possessed an annual life interest of £300, arising out of freeholds, the property of a Mr. Bryant, in Dorsetshire. Mr. Chistie, auctioneer, deposed to selling Mr. Bryant's whole estate, and a deed of conveyance, dated 1794, was produced. Mr. Smith stated that he witnessed a deed in 1802 between Mr. Bryant and Mr. Jefferys, whereupon Mr. Pigott called upon Sergeant Runnington to produce the 'criminal deed of qualification,' but without effect. Mr. Whitwell (Sheriff), produced the poll book, and an agreement to poll by tallies; Mr. E. Inge (Town Clerk), produced the Freemens roll, and forty years minutes of the meetings of Sir Thomas White's Charity. He was examined as to the disposal of its funds by the Corporation. Mr. Trist and Mr. Blogg gave evidence of Mr. Jefferys conversation with them. The former said: 'I proposed a toast, "The Corporation of Coventry," when Mr. Jefferys exclaimed, "Hang them, they are no friends of mine; they are blackguards; there's not a single gentleman amongst them! I have stood their champion; they called for me express; they knew my distressed situation; and when I reached Coventry, they sent a message by their Town Clerk to say they refused to support me unless I subscribed £1,500, as Captain Barlow had done."' Mr. John Woodcock, banker, examined, said he refused to open an election account, and kept all moneys which he received for that purpose in a purse. He discounted Captain Barlow's bills for £1,500, and that sum went into it; with £500 from Mr. Dickens for Mr. Jefferys, £500 from the Corporation, and his own and partners subscription also. The Drapers Company were too poor to subscribe. He and the County Hall Committee had access to the purse; the money was only used for legitimate and counsels expenses; none of it was used for the dinners at the Bear and King's Head. Mr. Dickens, in his evidence, admitted paying £500 for Mr. Jefferys legitimate expenses, and he had his promissory note, which he endorsed; and he knew of no other security to the Corporation or other person. Mr. Lilly gave evidence as to Deputy-Sheriff Carter's actions at the poll booth. Mr. Buck, Warden of the Drapers Company, stated that some gentlemen, but not of the Drapers, agreed to pay Mr. Jefferys expenses, but his own subscription had never been called for. Mr. Inge was again examined, and on the 28th, the Committee determined that the 106 Freemen who had received Sir Thomas White's Charity in October, previous to the election, were not disqualified. Many persons were examined to prove bribery, and other offences, against Aldermen, agents, or others. Joseph Swain, a Leicester out-voter (who polled Bird and Moore), gave a lively account of his arrival at the White Bear, and said that Mr. Barlow handed him from the chaise, gave him a glass of brandy and water to drink his health, and that he dined upstairs. When on the landing of the staircase he met Mr. Carter, who desired his vote for Jefferys and Barlow. 'I told him I would, but not unless I had ten guineas,' said the witness. 'Mr. Carter would not promise, and I went to leave, but he called me back and gave me the money; when I asked him, as a favour, to grant me the City £50, which he promised; and I then wanted a lease of some property; but my wife, who was present, refused to let me keep the ten guineas, and returned it.' He denied being inebriated, but his evidence was somewhat shaken by cross-examination. His wife followed in much the same strain, and various evidences were then given by persons as to illegal proceedings at the party inns. Various witnesses followed. The endeavour to solve a mysterious payment for a pocket of hops, due from one publican and voter at Dunchurch to another in the same trade, occupied considerable time, and occasioned much cross-swearing. On 3rd March, various Coventry publicans and others were examined as to treating and entertainment given on behalf of Messrs. Jefferys and Barlow. On the 9th, Mr. Carter (Attorney), was examined, and said he certainly saw Swain at the White Bear, but he was inebriated, and had to be ejected. He never promised or offered him anything. Other witnesses corroborated his statements. He was asked as to his connection with Mr. Inge, upon election money matters, and his office of Deputy-Sheriff, to which he replied. The Committee came to an end on the 11th. They determined that under the special conditions of the case, the deposit of £1,500 by Captain Barlow for election purposes was not contrary to law, and that there was no evidence of misappropriation of such deposit. Mr. Barlow had not offended against the Act, and they determined that he was duly elected. They further determined that Mr. Jefferys was not qualified under the Statute of Queen Anne to serve in Parliament as a Citizen. The petitions of Messrs. Bird and Moore were not frivolous or vexatious, neither was the opposition which Mr. Jefferys had offered to them."

CHAPTER LV.

TWO BYE-ELECTIONS: A PETITION, AND A COLLAPSE.

George III., continued (1803 to 1806).

New writ issued—Mr. Bird's retirement—Candidature of Mr. P. Moore—Mr. G. F. Stratton in opposition—Account of him—Poll commenced—Oaths and oath-taking—Mr. Moore's daily majorities—Possession of the booth—Swearing in specials—An Irish out-voter—Mr. Stratton's grand effort—Saturday's poll—Withdrawal of Mr. Stratton—Mr. Moore returned—Final state of the poll—Chairing—Mr. Moore's biography—A petition—Mr. Inge's statement—Committee declare Mr. Moore duly elected—Corporation and the tithes—Members votes—War resumed—Mr. W. Pitt again in office—Mr. Barlow's ill-health—His last vote, and death—Another bye-election—Mr. William Mills comes forward—Compact—Public entry—Colonel Marriott consents to stand—Mr. C. Parry also—The Colonel retires—Daily majorities in favour of Mr. Mills—Mr. Parry retires—Mr. Mills returned—His chairing—Biography—Death of Mr. Pitt—Ministry of "all the talents"—Death of Mr. Fox—Grenville's administration.



VERY soon after the announcement of the Committee's decision, a new writ was issued for Coventry. Mr. Bird withdrew, and retired for Mr. Peter Moore, who made a public entry into the City on 15th March. Two days afterwards, Mr. George Frederick Stratton, of Portman Square, London, and Great Tew, near Chipping Norton, came to the City, and declared himself a candidate in opposition to Mr. Moore. In 1780, Mr. Stratton was chosen for Carlington, but had been defeated at Eye, in 1802, by Admiral Cornwallis. He was a liberal-minded Churchman, and preferred "real liberty and the British Constitution to the false doctrines of French Equality."

The poll commenced at one o'clock mid-day on Saturday, the 19th, it having been agreed, after warm debates, on the suggestion of Mr. Moore, that the Freemen should take the oaths of supremacy and allegiance, the dictatory oath, and the two election oaths. Persons were appointed to administer them at the County Hall, and Free School, and they granted certificates to the Freemen taking the oaths. Mr. Moore had a majority on the first day, and on Monday his party took possession of the booth, when the Corporation swore in special constables to protect Mr. Stratton's men whilst polling, but they were worsted in an encounter.

A certain Freeman, an Irishman and an out-voter, came by coach from London to vote for the Whig candidate. He said, "I'm come to vote for ye, Mr. Moore." "Glad to see you," replied the gentleman addressed. "Charming weather. Very good of you to do so, I'm sure; very good indeed. When shall you poll?" "Oh,

soon, Sir," was Paddy's reply, "soon, Sir; but, Sir, I couldn't go to the booth in such an old hat and shabby coat as this; now could I, Sir?" whereat he piteously eyed his woe-begone belongings, which were neither of the latest fashion, or bought yesterday. The candidate's friends, equal to the occasion, soon found the necessary habiliments, and arraying the voter in a fine suit, took him again to Mr. Moore, to whom he said: "Well now, Sir, I don't know how I'll vote till I get a drink; I'm as dry as a pump, and could drain a stable bucketful, Sir!" A committee-man quickly supplied him with ale. "Hurrah now for Stratton!" says Paddy, bottoming the beer. "How so," said Mr. Moore; "don't you intend to vote for me then?" "Be easy now! Be easy, Mr. Moore, Sir! I'll keep my word, and vote for ye straight, that I will; but hadn't I a good right to drink success to Stratton, seeing as how, if he hadn't stood, the de'il a fine new hat, and a new suit of toggs, or a drop of ale, would have fallen to me share, at all, at all!"

On the 26th, Mr. Stratton's party made a grand effort, and gained a majority on the morning's poll; when the Sheriffs, Messrs. Vale and Clarke, resolved to poll vote for vote; but the next day Mr. Stratton's success vanished, and on Saturday the numbers stood: Moore 971, Stratton 870, leaving Moore 101 majority. Very few Freemen polled for Mr. Stratton on the 30th, and he declined to further contest, declaring that "certain circumstances" would give him another opportunity of offering himself, whereupon

MR. PETER MOORE

was returned. Two thousand four hundred and forty Freemen had polled, and the numbers stood—

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|-----|-----|------|
| For Mr. Peter Moore | ... | ... | 1294 |
| Mr. George Frederick Stratton | ... | ... | 1146 |
| Majority for Mr. Moore | | | 148 |

The chairing took place next day, in much the usual fashion.

Mr. Peter Moore was the second son of the Rev. Edward Moore, LL.B., Vicar of Over, Cheshire, and was born in 1750. His father died in 1755, and whilst young, he entered, and was sent out in, the East India Service. In India he made a fortune, and on his return to England, furnished Burke and Sheridan with much important information for their attacks on Warren Hastings. He became known to the chiefs of the Whig opposition. He had a property at Hadleigh, in Middlesex, but on gaining the seat in Parliament, became a Company promoter, and was an adroit hand at carrying Bills through the House. Amongst other concerns with which he became connected, were the building of Drury Lane Theatre and its management, the Highgate Tunnel, and the Imperial Gas Light Company.

A petition from Mr. Stratton and twelve Freemen was presented to Parliament

against Mr. Moore's return, on grounds of insufficient qualification and bribery; but when before the Committee, Mr. Inge, for the Coventry Corporation, said "that seven of the chief witnesses were dead, that the rest could not be found; and Mr. Moore was declared elected 3rd March, each party to pay its own costs." "The Corporation," adds Collier's family diary, "having ran into debt during the last two elections, advertised to sell the tithes on 5th March, which, bringing in a good round sum, was like selling the birthright of their predecessors to pay the expenses."

During 1803-5 the votes of the Coventry Members were given irregularly. Mr. Moore was a fluent speaker, but Mr. Barlow seldom spoke, and through failing health was often unable to attend the House.

In March, 1803, England and France became again involved in war. Buonaparte threatened invasion, but the whole nation promptly prepared to oppose him. Large sums of money were subscribed, volunteers enrolled, and all things got in readiness. About this time, Mr. Moore took considerable interest in the Additional Forces Bill, and the Foreign Troops Enlistment Bill, making lengthy speeches against the Government. The Addington Ministry succumbed in May, 1804, and Pitt again came into office.

Mr. Barlow's ill-health had prevented his attending for some time, but with Mr. Moore, and Mr. Charles Mills (Member for Warwick), he voted on the 8th April, 1805, in the division (216 against 216) for the impeachment of Lord Melville, for misappropriation whilst Treasurer of the Navy; when the Speaker gave his casting vote against the noble Lord.

The death of Mr. Barlow occurred shortly after, and on the 7th of May, a writ was issued for the election of a new Member. On the day following, Mr. W. W. Bird announced to the Coventry Freemen that Mr. William Mills, a gentleman connected with Warwickshire, would be a candidate. Negotiations were privately entered into between Mr. Bird's friends, the major part of the Corporation, and the Drapers Company, with a view to give their united support to Mr. Mills, who was a man of moderate views, like his brother Charles, who, at the General Election of 1802, had maintained the Independent interest at Warwick against the two nominees of the Castle. Finally, an agreement was signed by four members each of the Corporation, Drapers, and the Old Blue Freemen, pledging themselves, and their united support, to Mr. Mills. He came to Coventry on the 14th, and attended by a vast number of supporters, made a public entry into the City. This compact was not acceptable to a quantity of the Freemen, and on the 13th some of the dissentients interviewed Colonel Marriott, of the 24th Foot, then in Coventry Barracks, and he consented to contest the seat. In the meantime, some London out-voters had chosen Mr. C. Parry, and he also agreed to stand, and came to Coventry on the 16th, whereupon Colonel Marriott withdrew in his favour.

The poll opened on the 17th. Parties were greatly divided by the compact, whilst

most of the Old Blue joined the Corporation Freemen and the Drapers voters, many Freemen voted for Mr. Parry. The Mills party were the better organized and the stronger, for they had a majority of 76 on the first day's poll, which next day reached 114. On Monday morning, Mr. Parry's friends made an unsuccessful attempt to seize the booth, and the day's poll increased Mr. Mills majority to 145; whereupon "the next day Mr. Parry stopped all treating, and resigned." The total number polled was 1,256.

| | | | |
|------------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| For Mr. William Mills | ... | ... | 819 |
| Mr. C. Parry | ... | ... | 437 |
| Majority for Mr. Mills | ... | | 382 |

MR. WILLIAM MILLS,

being returned, took his seat in the House, and his chairing was held at Coventry on the 23rd. "It was a grand show, in fine weather, and considerable money was spent in rejoicing at the various public-houses *en route*. 'Mazarine' and 'Light Blue' were the colours chiefly used in the ribbon cockades upon the occasion;" and the old dyers flag, with its motto, "We dye to live, and live to die," was conspicuous.

Mr. William Mills, of Bisterne, County Southampton, was the grandson of Mr. John Mills, one of the Clerks in Chancery, and a son of the Rev. John Mills, Rector of Barford and Oxhill, Warwickshire, by Sarah, his wife, daughter of the Rev. William Wheeler, Vicar of Leamington Hastings, and was born 10th November, 1750. He was related through his wife to Mr. W. Wilberforce Bird, and both he and his brother Charles (the banker, of the firm of Glyn, Mills & Co., and Member for Warwick), married two sisters, the daughters of the Honourable Wriothsley Digby, of Coleshill, Warwickshire. Mr. William Mills married, 7th of April, 1786, Miss Elizabeth Digby, and was essentially a Warwickshire man. His first address to his constituents is dated at Barford, the 11th of May, 1805, where he was born, and a verse of the chairing song at this time runs—

"Ye Warwickshire lads and ye lasses,
Come see how this merry day passes;
Be merry and gay, rejoice and be glad,
For our hero to-day is a Warwickshire lad.
Warwickshire lad,
All be glad,
For our hero to-day is a Warwickshire lad."

At the time of his marriage he lived at Meriden Hall, but left it about 1790 for Bisterne. He possibly was at one time a sleeping partner in the bank of Glyn, Mills & Co.; and in general society became an extremely popular man, whilst in his family circle he was held in terms of extreme affection. There is a picture of him at Bisterne.

On the death of Mr. Pitt, in January, 1806, Mr. Fox was made Foreign Secretary, and "all the talents" Ministry formed; but Mr. Fox died in September, and Grenville carried on the administration until April, 1807.



SLANDER OVERTHROWN

Published by J. Blandford, Royal Exchange, 17, Chappin's Hall

"SLANDER OVERTHROWN:" GEORGE PRINCE OF WALES AND MR. NATHANIEL JEFFERYS,
EX-M.P. FOR COVENTRY, BEFORE THE SCREEN OF CARLTON HOUSE, LONDON.

(From a scarce pamphlet "The Patriots Review," in the Author's Collection.)

CHAPTER LVI.

THE FINANCIAL TROUBLES OF AN EX-M.P.

George III., continued (1806).

Mr. Jefferys pamphlet—"A Review of the conduct of the Prince of Wales"—Royal scandal—Society flutter—The case of Mr. Jefferys—His action in King's Bench—Verdict—The Prince's Commissioners deduction of ten per cent.—The ex-Member's bankruptcy—Re-commencing business—Bitter opposition pamphlets—Jefferys further writings—Replies thereto—Cartoon: "Slander overthrown"—Matters at a former election.

DURING June, 1806, a pamphlet was publicly printed by Mr. Jefferys, late M.P. for Coventry, entitled "A Review of the conduct of the Prince of Wales in his transactions with Mr. Jefferys during a period of more than twenty years, containing a detail of many circumstances relative to the Prince and Princess of Wales, Mrs. Fitzherbert, &c., &c.," which, together with "A Letter addressed to Mrs. Fitzherbert upon the influence of Example," by the same person, caused a considerable flutter in the upper circles of London Society, gave the author considerable unenviable notoriety, and, published at 20, Pall Mall, brought considerable profit to the ex-M.P.'s straitened finances, going through ten editions.

Mr. Jefferys stated that a few days after he had commenced business in Piccadilly, as a jeweller and goldsmith in 1783, the Prince of Wales became his customer, and in 1788, and subsequently, made large purchases. In 1796, the account stood at £85,028 19s. 6d., of which £50,997 10s. was for jewels supplied on the marriage of the Prince, £9,331 9s. 6d. for presents made by the Prince to the Queen and Royal family, and £24,700 for bond debts. Although £25,000 was paid off, no final settlement could be obtained, and Mr. Jefferys was obliged by necessity to commence an action for recovery in the King's Bench. His counsel were Mr. Erskine and Mr. Adam, and he obtained a verdict of £50,997, the deduction being an insurance upon the Prince's life to cover risk; but the Commissioners appointed under an Act to settle the Prince's affairs (ignoring the Court under powers they possessed by the Act), refused to pay unless a further deduction of ten per cent. was made from the jury's verdict, by which the amount was considerably reduced. This was a hardship upon Mr. Jefferys, whose creditors were pressing, but under the advice of his counsel he was forced to accept it. Soon after he became bankrupt, and paid one and ninepence in the pound. This was

during the time he was Member for Coventry. He afterwards re-commenced business in Pall Mall, but having lost his chief patrons, carried it on with difficulty.

Had the "Review" stopped with the recapitulation of Mr. Jeffery's affairs with the Prince, the matter would probably have rested, but it was spiced with the introduction of various matters connected with the Princess of Wales and Mrs. Fitzherbert, which set spark to power, and the friends of the Prince, anxious to clear His Royal Highness, published anonymously various opposition pamphlets in reply, impugning Mr. Jefferys statements and character, and giving much tittle-tattle and small incidents connected with the matter, which were purchased with avidity by the public. "Philo-Veritas" wrote "Diamond cut Diamond: A free and impartial view of Mr. Jefferys," and "The Diamond new pointed," to which the ex-Member wrote a reply, together with "A Letter to Mrs. Fitzherbert" upon "the influence of Example." Various pamphlets followed, and amongst them "An Antidote to Poison" by Claudio, "A Letter to Mr. Nathaniel Jefferys," "A Complete Vindication of His Royal Highness," and others. "The Patriots Review," professing to give "a complete account of this strange and unprecedented controversy," has for its frontispiece a cartoon entitled "Slander overthrown," and represents a scene before the screen of Carlton House, where the Prince of Wales is pelting Mr. Jefferys (who is down) with the various different pamphlets replying to his charges. To the citizens of Coventry, doubtless, these publications were as interesting as they were distasteful to the Court, and enlightened the Freemen upon various circumstances. In "Diamond cut Diamond" occurs the following matter relative to a past election at Coventry—

"Mr. Jefferys then went to Coventry, where he expended near £7,000 in gratifying his insatiable ambition in becoming a Member of Parliament for that City. Without moralizing upon this act of injustice to his creditors, I cannot but express a belief he wished to secure himself from the legal effects of the law by getting the protection that is attached to a person in Parliament. I am creditably informed that his principal creditor, Mr. R., of the City, on hearing of Mr. Jefferys journey into the *land of Promise*, immediately went after him, accompanied by *Messrs. Touch and Takehim*, of Tooke's Court, Chancery Lane. On their arrival at Coventry some arrangements were entered into, which, it is said, gave Mr. R. the possession of Mr. Jefferys houses and a sum of money. 'The Statesman' gives the following account of him when at Coventry in all his glory:—

"At Coventry the utmost precaution was taken for his personal security; and so critically desperate were his affairs, that all letters intended for him were sent under cover to a friend, who received, opened, and answered them, lest the bearer or postman might be a bailiff in disguise. In going to and returning from the hustings, he was always surrounded by a hired mob, to prevent the possibility of an arrest; and a writ having been sent down, which the officer either could not, or would not serve, the Sheriff was sued for the debt, and obliged to pay it. Was the Sheriff ever reimbursed by the late M.P. for the City of Coventry? Such was the fortune which Jefferys boasted that he had retired from business; and the means by which he gained his election were so pure and incorrupt, that he afterwards confessed it cost him, or rather cost his creditors, only £4,000 (believed to be nearer £7,000). When he became bankrupt, were these £4,000 fairly stated in his accounts? Did he insert, in the items submitted to the Commissioners, the sums which he had expended to keep up the show of opulence and splendour, while he was in a state of absolute insolvency? No! No! His books did not exhibit a single trace of any past career of extravagance, dissipation, or profligacy. All deficiencies, all the dreadful calamities experienced by himself and family, were ascribed to one cause—the dearth of enterprise which his concerns with the Prince of Wales had assumed."

CHAPTER LVII.

A COUPLE OF QUIET GENERAL ELECTIONS.

George III., continued (1806 to 1808).

A dissolution—Reason for it—Messrs. Moore and Mills again contest—Corporation canvass—Threatened opposition of Sir W. Bagshaw—Mills and Moore walk over—Are chaired—Mr. Moore and the Westminster election petitions—Calico Printers Bill—The King and the Catholic claims—Dissolves Parliament—Contest at Coventry—Messrs. Mills and Moore candidates—Drapers and London Freemen—Secure "Treasury candidates"—Colonel H. C. Montgomery and Mr. M. Shawe—A question of identity—"Irish Colonels"—The Mayor and the Whig mob—"A slippery Dog!"—Poll prolonged—The pollings—Messrs. Mills and Moore again returned—A Coventry Freeman's information "*sub rosa*"—Starting "The Coventry Herald."

SUDDENLY Parliament was dissolved by "All the Talents" Ministry, on 24th October, 1806, with the hope of obtaining a better majority; and Messrs. Moore and Mills declared themselves candidates. The Corporation began to canvass for them, each Alderman taking his Ward. Mr. Moore entered the City publicly on Monday, but Mr. Mills came in privately. Some of the Tories endeavoured to get Sir William Bagshaw to oppose them, but were unsuccessful, and when the election day arrived on Wednesday, 29th October, no opposition was offered; whereupon an old voter complains that "the Freemen were never more slighted, especially in London and the country." Again

MR. WILLIAM MILLS AND MR. PETER MOORE

represented Coventry, and they were chaired on the following day.

The new Parliament met 19th December. Mr. Moore brought in a Bill to enable Mr. Bowyer, of the Historic Gallery, Pall Mall, to hold an auxiliary lottery, which passed. Mr. R. B. Sheridan had succeeded in gaining Mr. Fox's seat for Westminster at the General Election, and Mr. Moore presented a petition from Mr. Henry Burgess, desiring to refute Mr. James Paul's petition charging him with crimes, in order to show that perjury had been committed to deprive the Right Hon. R. B. Sheridan of his seat, but Parliament's duration being short, they were not brought to an issue. Two days before its dissolution, Mr. Moore seconded Mr. Sheridan's motion for the reading of the Calico Printers Bill.

Parliament was short-lived, for the King desired to hear little of Catholic claims. The Ministry was changed, and that of Portland succeeded. His Majesty desired the ratification of his actions whilst fresh before the people, and a General Election resulted. Saturday, 4th May, was named at Coventry for the commencement of polling. Moore and Mills took up their quarters at the King's Head, and commenced a canvass.

Meanwhile, some of the Drapers Company, assisted by certain London Freemen, secured candidates to oppose them, and Colonel Henry Cunningham Montgomery and Mr. Merrick Shawe came to contest Coventry in the Tory interest. In their address, on the 2nd, they express zealous attachment to the King, the Church, and State, and desire to uphold the Laws, Liberties, and Religion. They disapprove of any coalition, or compromise, which may have a tendency to defeat the proper exercise of the franchise in the City, and assured the Freemen that their ambition was to allow them to answer favourably the appeal which the King had made. "Who are Montgomery and Shawe?" asks an elector. They were said to be two Irishmen. Mr. Montgomery had sat for the Cornish borough of Michell in the last Parliament, and was chosen for Donegal on the 4th May, 1808. His residence being at "the Hall" in that County, Mr. Shawe, it is said, was a relative to the Member for Dublin, and a bill adds—

"The Freemen of the City of Coventry present their compliments to the IRISH COLONELS, and wish to be satisfied upon a point which at present greatly embarrasses them, which is simply this:—Various reports prevail respecting their qualifications. Some say they consist of *Potatoe land* in IRELAND; if so, it is strongly suspected they are *Irish CATHOLICS*! Others assert that they are in *Egypt*, and that they are *Mahometans*! As nobody seems to know who they are, or from whence they came, the Freemen are of opinion that they had better support two honest ENGLISHMEN, whom they know, and whose integrity has been proven, than run the hazard of being taken in by undefined characters, who may probably have been SENT TO COVENTRY! as a Punishment for some glaring Impropriety!!!

"Coventry, May 4th, 1807.

Merridew, Printer."

Early morning on the 4th saw Messrs. Mills and Moore's party rallying the Town, when "the all-accomplished Mayor headed the mob," to the evident disapproval of the opposition. "You may be sure," writes one of it, "the Mayor would not do so unless he expected some benefit from it, but I trust he will have better security than Peter Moore's! Probably Mr. Mills has joined Peter in security; if so, he will be left to pay the piper: Peter, you know, is a slippery Dog!"

Montgomery and Shawe kept the poll open, to their opponents annoyance.

"Shawe and 'Gomery do not stay,
Squandering *public moneys*!
Shawe and 'Gomery run away;
Arrah! Do now, honies!"

It closed on the 9th, when the result was—

| | | | | |
|------------------------|-----|-----|-----|------|
| P. Moore, Esq. | ... | ... | ... | 1464 |
| W. Mills, Esq. | ... | ... | ... | 1464 |
| H. C. Montgomery, Esq. | ... | ... | ... | 703 |
| M. Shawe, Esq. | ... | ... | ... | 694 |

Majority for P. Moore, Esq., 761. Majority for W. Mills, Esq., 761.

MR. PETER MOORE, AND MR. WILLIAM MILLS,

being again chosen, were chaired the same day, and, says the Coventry Freeman in his diary quoted before, "each of the friends of the newly-elected Members had eight shillings delivered to them on Sunday."

"The Coventry Herald" newspaper was started by Mr. N. Merridew in 1808.

CHAPTER LVIII.

CITIZEN SOLDIERS: CHOOSING A NATIVE AS MEMBER.

George III., continued (1808 to 1813).

Celebration of the King's Jubilee—The Coventry Military Association—Its rules and formation—And subscription to local war funds—Death of Recorder, the Duke of Grafton—William, Earl Craven, chosen—The Craven Arms Hotel—An anecdote—Act passed—Hertford Street formed—Prince Regent and the Ministry—Parliament dissolved—Retirement of Mr. Mills—His after biography—Mr. Joseph Butterworth, a native—Declares himself a candidate—Corporation correspondence—Efforts to avoid a contest—Mr. Moore brings Colonel W. G. Harris—And comes to Coventry—Efforts to force Mr. Butterworth's retirement—His popular entry into Coventry—Withdrawal of Colonel Harris—His reasons for so doing—Mr. P. Moore and Mr. Joseph Butterworth returned—Illness of the former—Biography of the new Member.

COVENTRY celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the accession of George III, on October 25th, 1809, amidst considerable rejoicings. The Citizens were exceedingly loyal to the King during the war with France, and in spite of the heavy taxes and high prices of food, the people bore up cheerfully. King George was exceedingly popular, and the name of Napoleon detested. Recruiting went on, and Coventry supplied its quota to the Warwickshire Militia, but in 1796-7; in common with other towns; a body of Citizens was raised, calling themselves "the Military Association for the defence of the City and County of Coventry," whose regulations, embodied in twenty-three "general rules," form a curious reminiscence of early local soldiering. The Corps was to be composed of two troops of Horse, each of not more than fifty, exclusive of officers, and three companies of Infantry, each of not more than sixty, whose members were to be either householders of the City or County of Coventry, sons of householders, or persons approved by the Committee, and when complete, the Corps was to have five Captains, five Lieutenants, and five Cornets to command it, with one Adjutant and two Quarter-masters, all chosen from amongst themselves by ballot, and commissioned by the King. By Rule VI. it was enacted "that the Corps shall not be called out, or subjected to military discipline, except in case of invasion and insurrection, and then only to do duty within the City and County of Coventry, and shall only have existence during the continuance of the present war." Other rules related to payment when called out, that Cavalry officers of equal rank should take precedence of Infantry, and other matters for the Corps governance; whilst by Rule X.

the Government was to be asked to provide arms, accoutrements, ammunition, drums and trumpets, and likewise the pay of the Adjutant and two Quarter-masters. The Rev. Mr. Rann was the Chaplain of the Association, and the Corps drilled in the Park. In March, 1798, they received £1,100 from Government towards their expenses. At the time, subscriptions in support of the war were made at Coventry, and two thousand guineas were subscribed, which included £500 which the Military Association returned. The fear of "Boney's" threatened invasion raised these Volunteers in England, and their numbers deterred the Emperor from the enterprise. In 1807, a second Volunteer Company was raised in the City to join the first regiment of Warwickshire Volunteer Infantry, and in 1809, "the two Companies of Coventry Volunteers, with their regiment, entered into the First Regiment of Warwickshire Local Militia."

The Duke of Grafton, who for so many years had been Recorder of Coventry, died 14th March, 1811, whereupon the Corporation chose William, Earl Craven, to succeed him, and his Lordship entertained them at Combe Abbey on April 16th. In July, the famous house in High Street, which for generations had been known as the White Bear Inn, changed its name to "the Craven Arms Hotel," in honour of the new Recorder.

When the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Sussex passed through Coventry; 18th September, 1807, on their way from Ragley, the Marquis of Hertford's residence; to Combe Abbey, that of Earl Craven; their carriage was delayed in the very narrow and dangerous thoroughfare called Grey Friars Lane, which was then the only way into the City from the Warwick Road. Prince George, addressing Lord Hertford, said: "I hope, my Lord, the good people of Coventry will make their streets wider before I come here again." His words had their effect, for in 1811-12, an Act "for improving the public roads in and through the City of Coventry" was passed, which resulted in Hertford Street being made, and named out of compliment after the Marquis.

King George, being incapable of governing, the Prince of Wales became Regent. He continued his father's Tory Ministers, to the mortification of the Whigs. The Prince caused Parliament to be dissolved 29th September, 1812, and summoned a new one to assemble 24th November following. Mr. Mills, who spent a large sum at the last election, had prior to this signified his intention of not contesting Coventry again, and his withdrawal was received with regret. He retired to Bisterne, and does not appear to have sought further Parliamentary honours. His death occurred in London on the 18th March, 1820, in the 70th year of his age, and he was buried in the Chancel of St. Peter's Church, Barford, near Warwick, as an urn there, by Westmacott, of London, records.

Mr. Joseph Butterworth, a London law stationer, and a native of Coventry, was now solicited to become a candidate by some of the Freemen of the Metropolis, and Dissenters of Coventry, a position he readily accepted. He came to Coventry, made

the Craven Arms Hotel his headquarters, and got together a Committee of workers and voters.

The Corporation party were anxious to avoid a contest, and Alderman Whitwell entered into correspondence with Mr. Butterworth for the joining of their interests; but knowing that Mr. Moore had incurred very considerable expense whilst representing Coventry, stipulated that Mr. Butterworth should guarantee a portion of Mr. Moore's election costs. Mr. Butterworth desired to work with Mr. Moore, but considering, as he states, that "to enter into a previous engagement to pay a certain part of the expenses of a contested election would subject me to the imputation of purchasing a seat in Parliament," declined the compact; but nevertheless left himself in the hands of his friends, and returned to London. In a letter he says, "I have secured all the Coventry coaches, and I have little doubt that the Freemen will kindly support me. On the other hand, as a sincere friend to the Freemen and the inhabitants of my native City, and a cordial friend to the union of all parties when conducted on right principles, I most sincerely deplore the effects of a contested election." Awaiting the advice of his friends, he endeavoured to promote the return of Mr. Moore and himself, and a canvass was also commenced at Coventry with that object. In an address, dated 2nd October, Mr. Butterworth offered himself as "perfectly independent" in principles, and "unconnected with any party;" "a friend of peace," and attached to the "glorious constitution;" adding, "I have cherished an ardent desire to promote the interests of my country generally, and of my native City in particular."

Mr. Moore's friends, finding they could not force Mr. Butterworth into a compact, solicited Colonel William George Harris, "the amiable and gallant son of the prematurely-distinguished hero of Seringapatam," to become their second candidate. He consented, and, with Mr. Moore, came to Coventry on 3rd October, where they addressed the Freemen from their headquarters at the King's Head Hotel. They met the Mayor, Alderman Vale, and the chiefs of the party. Some did not like a military man, but acquiesced, as it was supposed he would pay the required proportion of Mr. Moore's expenses.

Efforts were made to get Mr. Butterworth to retire, but he resolutely determined to go to the poll. Two of his friends had met Mr. Harris, and Colonel Harris, at Mr. Moore's London residence, on the 29th, in order to settle matters. Mr. Harris said that as it was agreed to support the Colonel, Mr. Butterworth stood no chance; and Mr. Moore read a letter stating that "Colonel Harris was approved by the Treasury, and that they had no objection to himself." No arrangement was arrived at, and on the 2nd, Mr. Butterworth came to Coventry, where he was met by a great concourse of people, who escorted him to the Craven Arms. He was expected to be in opposition to the Ministry and a friend of the Dissenters, but his views were not very pronounced, as he desired to be independent of party.

Mr. Butterworth's firmness saved him, for on the 5th, previous to the commencement of the poll, Colonel Harris, annoyed at some rough treatment he had received from the mob (who surrounded the poll booth, and getting on the top of it, caused the erection to fall down with a crash), withdrew from the contest, and issued a retiring address. "I entered Coventry," he says, "under the countenance of such an immense attendance of friends; judge of my surprise soon afterwards to find a host united against me. This opposition must evidently mark your feelings, and finding they are hurt from the supposition that your principles of independence were at stake, I have resolved to retire out of respect to them, and not to the principles of your candidate, Mr. Butterworth. I know that you have taken him up, not being able in your hasty and wide search to obtain a better, and thus he may thank accident that has given him the victory." The contest ended, and the same day, 5th October,

MR. PETER MOORE AND MR. JOSEPH BUTTERWORTH

were duly returned to Parliament. After the contest, Mr. Moore, who had been ailing during the contest, was taken unwell, and retired to Margate to regain health; his life was despaired of, but subsequently he rallied and recovered.

The new Member was descended from a very old Lancashire family, which became seated at Butterworth, near Rochdale, in the time of King Stephen. In 1753, the Rev. John Butterworth removed from Rochdale to Coventry, and became Minister of the little Baptist community in Jordan Well. Hardly known beyond his own particular friends and congregation, this Pastor's labours in Coventry during his more than fifty years ministry were of a quiet and homely character. Chiefly by his exertions, a new and larger Chapel was built in Cow Lane, whilst in 1785 he published a "Concordance and Dictionary of the Scriptures." By marriage he had a son, Mr. Joseph Butterworth, the Member, who received education from his father, and at the Coventry Free School. The youth was brought up as a Baptist, and apprenticed to a harness plater, of Birmingham, a trade which he had chosen. He removed to London with his master, and in time commenced business for himself. Among young Butterworth's friends was Mr. Whieldon, a law stationer, of Fleet Street, who, in 1780, took him into partnership, under the firm of Whieldon and Butterworth, law stationers, and upon his death left him a great part of his property. Mr. Joseph Butterworth married a Miss Cooke, of Trowbridge, whose sister was the wife of Dr. Adam Clarke, and possibly by this connection he became attached to the Wesleyan Methodists. The firm became "Joseph Butterworth and Son, 43, Fleet Street," and in a few years he realized a large fortune. Philanthropic and charitable, he was instrumental in founding the British and Foreign Bible Society, whose early meetings were held at his house in Fleet Street.

CHAPTER LIX.

PEACE CELEBRATIONS : TRADE GRIEVANCES.

George III., continued (1814 to 1818).

End of the war—Celebrating the peace at Coventry—A handbill thereon—The procession—How formed—"Britannia's car"—Godiva procession omitted—A loyal address—Knighthood for the Mayor—Rumoured dissolution—Mr. Peter Moore's "patriotic address"—Extracts—Mr. Butterworth and Ministerial votes—Mr. Moore and the choice of candidates—The word "Radical"—"Constitutional meeting" of "the friends of Reform"—Grievances of the watch and ribbon trades—Brought before the House—Action by the Corporation thereon.



NAPOLEON'S crushing defeat at Waterloo, in June, 1815, and his subsequent banishment to St. Helena, caused joy to Englishmen, but the peace which followed found this country on the verge of bankruptcy; trade was bad, food at famine prices, and the people everywhere unsettled. None welcomed the termination of the war more than the Citizens of Coventry; they celebrated the peace with great rejoicings, and a procession of unusual magnificence. A handbill reads—

"CITY OF COVENTRY—CELEBRATION OF THE PEACE.

"The inhabitants of the City propose, on Wednesday next and the two following days, to celebrate the glorious and auspicious era which gives to Europe the blessings of Peace, under circumstances holding out more real and prospective happiness than ever gladdened the hearts of Britons and of Europe. The day will be ushered in at six o'clock by the harmonious peals of our unrivalled bells, whose melodies are so well calculated to excite the most intelligent feelings on all subjects connected with general joy; at nine, the permanent staff of the 1st and 4th Warwickshire Regiments will fire three volleys in Cross Cheaping, accompanied by their respective bands. A most superb procession will proceed from the County Hall at eleven o'clock."

In the procession rode the Mayor, Aldermen, Sheriffs, and Council, attended by the City Crier, Beadle, Sword and Mace Bearers, and other officials. "The Lodge of Freemasons walked, and the City Companies of Mercers, Drapers, Clothiers, Blacksmiths, Tailors, Cappers, Butchers, Fellmongers, Carpenters, Silk Weavers, Cordwainers, Bakers, and Weavers appeared; representatives from all the Wards, attended by streamers, followers, and drum and fifes; the various Benefit Societies were conspicuous, but the chief attraction was "*Britannia*, personated by an elegant female seated in a magnificent triumphal car, conducted by *Neptune*, and drawn by six white horses, rode by *Tritons*, with appropriations symbolical of the genius of the procession, supported by representatives of the Army and Navy." Through these rejoicings the Godiva Procession was omitted. On 6th November, a deputation from the Coventry Corporation presented a loyal address to the Prince Regent, then staying at Combe Abbey, when, at the particular desire of Recorder Lord Craven, the Prince knighted the Mayor, Mr. Skears Rew.

Rumours of a dissolution were afloat, but Mr. Peter Moore, replying to a communication from the President of the Coventry Weavers Committee, stated his disbelief in them, although he personally desired there should be one, as the times were favourable to the cause he represented ; but Ministers, he said, would not dare to venture on an appeal to the country to secure a new lease of office. His "patriotic letter" of August, 1816, was printed, and is a sensible production, inveighing against a Government who sought speedy dissolution to the disadvantage of the country ; against its nominees, who, supported by "Treasury money," entered the political arena, pledged only to support it ; and against such "Deputies" as had "joined in combination against the people, and have, what the public voice does not hesitate to declare, sold them to the Minister of the day, for the promotion of jobbery." Mr. Butterworth's opponents declared that he had, although pledged to act independently, voted for the Minister, and this was evidently intended for him.

The word "Radical" was about this time first applied to persons agitating for extreme reforms and measures, when meetings were held to forward advanced ideas. One of these was held in a field near Cook Street, Coventry, on 28th January, 1817. The Mayor, anticipating trouble, had refused the use of the County Hall. Largely attended, the meeting passed off peaceably ; Parliament was asked to alleviate the national distress and taxation, and to carry out a reform of Parliamentary representation. Petitions to this effect were adopted, and the Members asked to be present and support them. As showing the low ebb through which the City was passing, it is stated that nearly half the population of Coventry depended for subsistence upon the Parish rates, and the contributions of individuals ; and further, that numerous families were compelled to seek an asylum in the "House of Industry," from the effect of those taxes so profusely voted by Parliament.

In July, 1817, Mr. Moore acted as Chairman of a Committee of the House to enquire into certain grievances concerning the watch trade. The Coventry ribbon weavers also had their troubles, and petitioned Parliament for an Act to regulate the price of labour in the ribbon manufacture. Their trade being bad, labour was poorly paid for, and many persons sought relief from the rates. In a measure, this arose from there being too many hands ; occasioned by a ruinous system practised by certain masters of taking half-pay apprentices (amounting to hundreds, and mostly females), who, by low prices paid for wages, were able to undersell the legitimate manufacturers ; and who, in turn, had to screw down the wages of their workpeople in order to compete, or lose their customers. The Corporation petitioned in favour of the Act being passed, and gave £50 as a donation towards the object, believing that if the labour was regulated upon the principle adopted in London, Middlesex, and Dublin, the distress and rates of the City would be lessened.

CHAPTER LX.

THE FIRST RETURN OF A CELEBRATED MEMBER.

George III., continued (1818).

A sudden dissolution—Free of expense—Grandiloquent address—Synonymous one—Radical Reformers obtain Sir C. Wolseley—His arrival—And Mr. Moore's—Mr. Edward Ellice's address—Mr. William Cobbett and London Freemen—His pioneer—Mr. Bryant—Bitterness—Dismay of Mr. Butterworth—Defends his votes—"Wolf in sheep's clothing"—"Joseph Unmasked"—Mr. Ellice's triumphant entry—Advent of Mr. Wooler—Commencing the poll—Partial destruction of the booth—Poll adjourned—Daily progress—"To be sold"—"A curious resolution"—Verses—"The turncoats petition"—Weavers and "donkeying"—A famous Blue chief—Further progress—Mr. Butterworth's threat—His resignation—End of the polling—The chairing and song—Celebration dinner—"The Freemen's Hurrah!"

PARLIAMENT was suddenly dismissed in June, 1818, and another summoned for the 4th of August following. In December, prior to this, Mr. Moore's party had desired to return their man "free of expense," whilst in May, Mr. Butterworth in a handbill explained his Parliamentary conduct, and grandiloquently exclaimed, "I have endeavoured to reduce enormous taxation, to oppose no improvement expenditure, to promote the interests of trade, commerce, and peace, to labour on behalf of the poor, to afford education on behalf of their children, to resist raising the price of corn, to reform abuses and to support the laws, in order to protect the liberties of our glorious constitution," and having admitted that it is hard for an "independent man" to satisfy parties upon all occasions, he hoped he had done his duty faithfully and well, ending the address—"With sentiments of unfeigned respect and gratitude. I am, gentlemen, your faithful obedient servant, *Joseph Butterworth.*" It usually had been part of the Corporation programme to side with the Ministry in power; when "All the Talents" were in office Moore and Mills were their favourites; subsequently the administration changed, Mr. Moore lost their support, and they adopted Mr. Butterworth. Mr. Butterworth's opponents took advantage of the high flow of language in his address, and Turner printed a humorous synonymous satirical one, signed as in imitation—"With sentiments of *feigned* respect and gratitude. I am, gentlemen (anything but), your faithful obedient servant, *Joseph Butter-mouth.*"

Whilst Mr. Butterworth addressed himself to the Corporation and chief inhabitants principally, "the Radical Reformers" obtained the services of Sir Charles Wolseley, of Wolseley Park, Staffordshire, to oppose him; and the Baronet publicly entered Coventry

on the 10th of June amidst a vast assemblage, who conducted him to the Craven Arms, where, making a speech, he temporarily placed his services at their disposal. Mr. Moore arrived the next day, being in a like manner conducted to the Craven Arms, and from a window of the Hotel proceeded to dilate upon his own excellent services, past and to come.

On the 12th the writs arrived. Both Moore and Butterworth issued addresses; the latter busied himself with a canvass, and issued bulletins daily, announcing success. Rumours of another candidate spread, and a deputation went to London to interview Mr. Edward Ellice, a brother-in-law of Lord Grey, who, strongly recommended by Lord Brougham and Mr. Tierney, issued the following address on the 12th; whereupon Sir Charles Wolseley immediately resigned—

"TO THE INDEPENDENT FREEMEN OF THE CITY OF COVENTRY.

"Gentlemen,—A deputation from Coventry having informed me that I was put in nomination yesterday, at a meeting of the Freemen, to represent your ancient City in Parliament, I am not so insensible of the honour you have done me as to decline their call, and I shall hasten to Coventry to give all the assistance in my power to the cause you have undertaken. But, gentlemen, I pray you to recollect that cause is your own, and that it depends entirely on your own exertions to secure your independence. From circumstances which I have explained to your deputation, it may not be in my power to appear among you till Monday morning, but you may depend upon then seeing me.

"The principles upon which I shall ask your free suffrages are those on which our glorious Revolution was established in 1688—and if it be your pleasure to return me as your Representative in Parliament, I shall be happy to execute that important trust, by the side of your late worthy Representative, Mr. Moore, by a faithful attention to your local interests, and by a zealous desire to secure and protect the liberties and rights of the people, and the constitution of the country.

"I have the honour to be, gentlemen,

"Your faithful and obedient servant,

"London, 12th June, 1818."

"EDWARD ELLICE.

Meanwhile, certain London Freemen met at the Eagle, in the City Road, when Mr. Henry Hunt was chosen Chairman, and Mr. William Cobbett proposed as a candidate for Coventry. Mr. Bryant was sent to the City to arrange for his nomination and candidature, but his reception there was such that he despaired of success. He announced that Mr. Cobbett, who was then out of England, would, on his return, personally address the Freemen, and come forward at the next vacancy. Mr. Bryant was severe upon Mr. Ellice; he declares that—

"When it was once known that an advocate of Parliamentary Reform (Mr. Cobbett) and Retrenchment, who could never be bought, offered himself a candidate for your City, that moment the Whigs, who are the true aristocrats of the country, set every engine at work (perhaps with the very cognizance of persons in your very City), and with a price, to bring in a man of whom you know yet nothing, but as brother-in-law of Lord Grey, and the Commissioner of Portsmouth Dockyard; one of the few jobs done by the Whig administrators, who gave the late Sir Charles Saxton his full salary, in the form of a pension, for so retiring to make a vacancy for the brother-in-law of this Mr. Ellice."

Mr. Butterworth was dismayed, at the close of his successful canvass, to find such formidable opposition, and a proposed coalition of Mr. Moore with Mr. Ellice against

him. He had supported the weavers claims for Parliamentary assistance, but opponents contended that his conduct had been vacillating. Reports said he voted for the Corn Bill of 1815, the Standing Army's Act, and Habeas Corpus Bill. He denied the first indictment, for he had opposed and voted against the Corn Bill, but he voted for the Standing Army's Bill, as he objected to throwing so many veterans on the parish for support, and justified his vote upon the Habeas Corpus Act. Enemies persisted in calling him a turncoat, and a handbill desired the Freemen to "beware of the wolf in sheep's clothing," whilst "Joseph Unmasked" appeared, of which two verses read—

" All ye who love your country's cause,
 Assert *your ancient right*, Sirs,
 And *for your King*, and *Church*, and *Laws*,
 Stand up by day and night, Sirs;
 A crafty, double-dealing Fox
 Would *rob you of your votes*, Sirs,
 But may he rather grace the stocks,
 With all who *TURN* their coats, Sirs.
 Some *nobs* he humbugs with his smiles,
 The *Methodists* he gammons,
 But sooner than become his foils
 We'll send up *Cobbler Sammons*;
 If he returns, 'twill serve you right
 If *he throws out your Bill*, Sirs,
 And truly, if I judge aright,
 I doubt not but *he will*, Sirs."

Posters now announced the arrival of Mr. Ellice on the 15th. He was met on the London Road by his and Mr. Moore's partizans, who, headed by a band, made a most enthusiastic rally round the Town, and attended him to the Craven Arms, where he addressed the Freemen.

At this juncture, Mr. T. J. Wooler, a revolutionary publisher, and editor of "the Black Dwarf," a political catch-penny, and "libel upon every man and every sacred institution," came to Coventry, intending to become a candidate. The hotels refused to accommodate him, and on attempting to address the crowd from a window of the Craven Arms, he was assailed with general disapprobation. Mr. Bryant sought to show the co-operation of Mr. Ellice with Wooler, to the detriment of the former. George Cruikshank, the caricaturist; who in 1815 was working for Wooler; in his cartoon, "Coriolanus (George IV.) addressing the Plebs," shows Cobbett, Wooler, and Hunt in a group, and "the black dwarf" is conspicuous by his "duck's head cap."

On Tuesday morning the opposing parties met at the booth in Cross Cheaping, and the candidates were proposed, but upon Mr. Butterworth's supporters shewing themselves, the Blue party; who held possession of the booth, and partially destroyed it; prevented their voting. Mr. Butterworth's voters requested the Magistrates to protect them, and the Sheriffs were compelled to adjourn the poll until nine o'clock on Wednesday morning. Mr. Moore, when at the booth, acknowledged that he and Mr. Ellice had now joined their interests.

The Ellice and Moore party again took possession of the booth on Wednesday, the 17th, and the Magistrates swore in a number of constables to keep the peace, and aid the polling of the friends of their candidate; but "neither the Corporation promises or threats, nor the assistance of 150 constables, could ever raise anything of a party in his favour at the booth." The Sheriffs ordered the poll to be taken at the two sides, so that each party could come up separately, but the Blue mob impeded Mr. Butterworth's Freeman, and at four o'clock, the first day's poll was—Moore 153, Ellice 122, and Butterworth 106.

On Thursday, the following was issued—

"Wonder of Wonders! To be sold, and entered upon immediately after the present Election,
A NEWLY-ERECTED HOG STYE,
Now standing in the Cross Cheaping. What's most remarkable, is that it was built by a *Drove or Corporation of the Hogs themselves* for their own exclusive accommodation, but luckily they have been *routed out*. As to themselves, it is clear they will never be able to *save their bacon*. We should advertise them for sale also, but they have been already *bought and sold* so often, that every dealer is ashamed of having anything to do with them."

This day's poll ended—Moore 265, Ellice 222, Butterworth 172; and although Mr. Butterworth tried hard to keep up the spirits of his friends, the third day's poll, on February 19th, ended—Moore 408, Ellice 347, Butterworth 257. During the day an amusing squib, entitled "Resolutions of a Private Conference of the Returning Officers of this City," was printed by Turner, which has—

"Resolved, That Mr. C., having providentially a long arm, he be armed with a long wand, so that, if by good fortune a friend of Mr. B. do appear in any part of Cross Cheaping, he may be pointed out, and a lane made for him to come up to the booth. Resolved, That if no wand can be found to answer the ends of JUSTICE, Mr. C. be requested to make use of the spire of ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH; but unless he should be accused of *over-reaching*, we particularly enjoin him to touch no man who is more than a quarter of a mile from the booth.

"(Signed) Alderman P., Chairman."

On Saturday, the poll opened with considerable contention, and Mr. Moore spoke there in favour of Mr. Ellice and himself. A rhyme adds—

" 'My friends,' says Moore, 'I have no relish
To go with anyone but *Hellish*;
I'd sooner go with him to prison
Than go with Butterworth to heaven; '
We've tried *this Moore* in all his paces,
And now we find him with *two faces*.'"

Mr. Butterworth declared his intention to prolong the poll, which annoyed his opponents, who also had their rhyme in the following—

"Butterworth's men
Are as one to ten,
But Ellice's boys,
Near his own handsome size,
In hundreds they come,
At the sound of the drum,
Demanding to poll
They advance one and all,
And who shall stand them a parley."

A satirical poem, "The Turncoat's Petition," to be sung by Mr. B., as Dr. Cantwell in the Hypocrite, gave Mr. Butterworth annoyance—

"Pity the sorrows of a middle-aged man,
Gross, gross delusion brought him to your door,
His hopes are dwindled to the shortest span,
Oh! give a vote to eke his scanty store.

These *ragged paupers* my lost cause bespeak,
These *special constables* proclaim my fears,
And every furrow in my sallow cheek,
Is now a channel to a flood of tears.

Yon house erected on *St. Stephen's* ground,
With tempting aspect drew me from my shop;
Crown lawyers there good customers I found,
And there for ever I had hoped to stop.

But hard the fate of Ministerial tools,
Here, as we humbly craved each Freeman's vote,
They drove us from them, called us rogues and fools,
And swore they'd turn him out who turned his coat.

Oh! take me where no Freeman can be found,
Some rotten borough take me to thy arms:
These groans and hisses are a fearful sound,
These angry faces fill me with alarms.

* * * * *

Pity the sorrows of a middle-aged man,
Gross, gross delusion brought him to your door,
His hopes are dwindled to the shortest span,
Oh! give a vote to eke his scanty store."

The weavers were warned at this time, in the handbills, against "the man in Hertford Street, who would not sign their agreement." The mob, in a spirit of lawlessness, seized Mr. Horsfall, a ribbon manufacturer, who had given offence to his men, and; although he was an old man of nearly 70 at the time; amidst two hours of infinite uproar, paraded him through the streets, seated on a donkey, the magistrates appearing powerless, an Alderman and the Head Constable standing by, whilst the procession passed, "but they took no notice, and went away and had a glass of brandy and water together."

Amongst the chiefs of the dark blue party, no one was more forward at election times than Mr. Charles Lilly, an opulent manufacturer, whose business premises were just without the ancient contour of the City walls, west of the City, where his influence was considerable, from which reason he became known as "King of Spon." He was a respected Citizen, and, in conjunction with Mr. John Thorp, had introduced Mr. Ellice to Coventry. His favourite resort was "the Black Horse Inn," then the extreme end of the suburbs on the Birmingham Road, where oftentimes he was appealed to, and settled neighbours differences and disagreements, instead of the matters going publicly before the Magistrates. He was a jovial soul, as his portrait, painted by David Gee, a local artist, shows; but his great delight was in "dabbling in politics," and he was often, in

consequence, satirized in election literature. In "A Peep into the Hustings," issued by the Butterworth party, where "the Principal Performers" are said to consist of "Renegade Blues, Disloyal Churchmen, Factious Demagogues, Anarchists, and French Republicans," Captain Dismal is introduced, and loudly exclaims against the exercise of "Civic Jurisprudence," as contrary to established practice at Coventry, and ruinous to the Blue candidates; whereupon "Captain Lilly," alias "Baron Von Thunder Trunk," adds: "Tis the most ungentlemanly thing Carter ever did! What! direct the Sheriffs to act legally, and refuse to poll our men in preference to Butterworth's! I'll—I'll—I'll give him notice for trial at the Black Horse for it! Now mind ye, Carter—John Carter, Town Clerk—I charge ye with dereliction of duty, and order you to answer the complaint at the Supreme Court at Spon End, the second day next term. Barnes, you will see how the jury are empannelled." Proceeding, the bill shows how, in his wrath, the Baron is removed to the Castle Inn, adjoining the hustings, where he had a "dreamy meditation," and saw the spirits of Glyn, Groves, Waring, and Yeo, who, rebuking him for his degeneracy, carried a scroll with the names of persons of known loyalty thereon, with one name erased, which his heart misgave him was his own. The worthy gentleman, having taken some of Grant's (Grant was a politician of the Cobbett school) anti-spasmodic mixture, recovered, "ordered out his vehicle, and seating himself therein, drove off, repeating the sixth and seventh of Shakespeare's Ages." Such were the vagaries of the times.

When the fourth day's poll closed, on Saturday, the 20th, 806 Freemen had polled, and Mr. Butterworth's majority was receding, for the numbers stood—Moore 558, Ellice 479, Butterworth 327; and at the close of the fifth day—Moore 737, Ellice 621, Butterworth 422. On the 22nd, Mr. Butterworth defended himself from an attack made upon him by Mr. Moore, and declared that as there were yet eleven days to poll, and two-thirds of the register unpolled, he would continue to the finish.

The sixth day's poll ended—Moore 917, Ellice 766, Butterworth 520; and the seventh—Moore 1,103, Ellice 929, Butterworth 607. On the 25th, Mr. Thomas Allen sent a letter to the Sheriffs, announcing Mr. Butterworth's withdrawal, but reserving "the right of contesting hereafter the proceedings at the election in such a manner as he may be advised." The poll therefore closed on Thursday morning, 25th of June, the eighth day of polling, when 1,624 Freemen had polled, the result being—

| | | | | |
|----------------------------|-----|-----|-----|------|
| For Peter Moore, Esq. | ... | ... | ... | 1180 |
| „ Edward Ellice, Esq. | ... | ... | ... | 1000 |
| „ Joseph Butterworth, Esq. | ... | ... | ... | 624 |

The latter gentleman now left for London, and the elected ones paraded the streets, but during their rally four voters were polled for Butterworth.

MR. PETER MOORE, AND MR. EDWARD ELlice,
were declared elected.

The Members were chaired on the 27th, and the procession started from the Drapers Hall at eleven o'clock. The chairs were covered with mazarine; the canopies with gold fringe, and bedecked with a profusion of Coventry ribbons.

“THE CHAIRING SONG, 1818.

Come cheer up my lads, to your freedom stand firm,
As King of the Ocean, we'll weather the storm;
Integrity calls out, fair liberty we see,
Weaves her flag o'er our heads, and her words are *be free*.

Hearts of oak are we still, for we're joined to those men,
Who always are ready—steady, boys, steady—
To fight for our freedom again and again.

Honour's brow still with laurels, for ever, we'll crown,
To servile dependence, we scorn to bow down;
Triumphant we rise, o'er our foes we prevail,
MOORE and ELLICE for ever, their ears shall assail.

Hearts of oak, &c.

To King George, as true subjects, we loyal bow down,
As Freeman, we claim Magna Charta our own;
Let the rest of the world slavish worship decree,
England's genius has ordered her sons shall be free.

Hearts of oak, &c."

The usual procession started from the Drapers Hall at eleven o'clock, and proceeding round the Town, at length ended before the Craven Arms, where it left the Members. In the evening there was a dinner at the Drapers Hall, where, amidst much hilarity, speeches of a complimentary character were made, and "The Freeman's Hurrah! A Song of Victory," was conspicuous; a verse of which runs thus—

"Fly not yet, ye high of soul,
But deeply drain the victors bowl;
First to *Moore* fill high your glasses,
Ellice next, and then *the lasses*.
Hurrah! Hurrah!! Hurrah!!!

Chorus—Shout hurrah for all the *three*,
We dare be freest of the free,
Hurrah! Hurrah!! Hurrah!!!"



CHAPTER LXI.

A BIOGRAPHY, AND A DESCRIPTION.

George III., continued (1818 to 1820).

An account of Mr. Edward Ellice—His Canadian and Scotch properties—His characteristics—Anecdote as to his writings—Lady Hannah Ellice—Dislike of office—Mr. Butterworth's desire to further contest Coventry—His elections at Dover—His death—Distress—Rates—Mr. William Cobbett's description of Coventry—"Eight thousand miserable paupers"—Presentation to Mr. Peter Moore—Cheylesmore estate sold to the Marquis of Hertford.



MR. EDWARD ELLICE, who for many years represented Coventry, came of an old Scotch family, long resident in Aberdeen. He was born in Canada about the year 1781, and was sent to be educated at Marischal College in that town, where he matriculated in 1797. His father, Mr. Alexander Ellice, was a merchant, and at an early age had left this country for America; where, engaging in the fur trade, he became a director of the Hudson's Bay Company, and made a considerable fortune. He married, and Mr. Edward Ellice was his eldest son; a second son became a Captain in the Navy, and interested himself in his brother's elections at Coventry; whilst another was a London Banker, and a Director of the East India Company. On leaving College, Mr. Edward Ellice joined his parents in America, and engaged in the Hudson's Bay business; but subsequently came back to England, and became a partner in the firm of Inglis and Ellice—an extensive West Indian and American house. His commercial career was a great success, and he added largely to the great wealth acquired by his father, who had died in America. Mr. Ellice possessed properties in Canada, amongst them the very extensive Manor of Beauharnais, a large estate situate about twenty miles from Montreal, and he visited America upon several occasions up to 1859. He also possessed considerable property at Glenquoich, lying between the Caledonian Canal and Loch Hourne, Inverness, where he often kept open house, and entertained a large number of persons annually. When he first sat for Coventry, he was about thirty-seven years of age. The author of "Random Recollections of the House of Commons," says he was a good speaker, and when addressing the House upon important questions, always spoke with animation and feeling; his words commanding the deepest attention. His voice was strong and powerful, occasionally husky and unpleasant, but his command over it was complete. His action, when agitated, was generally

violent, the use of his arms was then extravagant, and "he would on such occasions turn about his body in a manner not unlike a weathercock on a windy day." He was about middle height, corpulent, and had a round face, sallow complexion, with dark brown hair; in the House he was known as "Bear Ellice." His countenance was good-natured, but by no means intellectual. Mr. Ellice, however, possessed superior talents, and nothing gave him greater pleasure than to help others, especially struggling youths, and this in a quiet unostentatious way. His views were Liberal in the extreme, but not Radical. He was a clever writer, and contributed various articles to "The Morning Chronicle" upon Colonial and other affairs. Few persons could master his manuscript, and the compositors complained that they were unable to decipher his fine, small "pin head," and almost illegible, words; but the editor, Mr. John Black, could not understand this, and declared to the men that it "was easily read, and well worth reading, too." His first wife was Lady Hannah Althea Grey, sister of the second Earl Grey (the widow of Captain Bettesworth, R.N.), which lady he married in 1809, and by whom he had a son, Mr. Edward Ellice, M.P. for Inverness Burghs. Lady Ellice, in the first days of his official duties, often wrote despatches from his dictation, and otherwise lessened her husband's duties, and her early death greatly affected him. Mr. Ellice, after retiring from office, declared he would rather be a bailiff on a farm in the north of Scotland than submit again to the drudgery of a Government office, in which he found no relaxation or ease; as wherever he went, every second day, a boxfull of all kinds of letters was perpetually following him, the answering of which occupied a whole day.

Although Mr. Butterworth always desired to represent Coventry again, his political connection with the City now ceased. He was far too honest a candidate for the close and self-elected Corporation, who required a man of greater daring. In contesting Dover, for which town he was chosen on the 6th March, 1820, he appeared more of a Whig; but on seeking re-election there in 1826, he was beaten by 548 votes, being fourth on the poll. In ill-health at the time, he was seized with sunstroke, which brought on brain fever, of which he died, at the age of fifty-six.

Great distress existed in Coventry during the early years of the century, and the system of giving relief was far from perfect. In 1801, there were 400 poor in "the House of Industry," but in 1802 it fell to 274, and in 1805 to 177. It then fluctuated, and in 1816 rose to 265, and the next year to 286. A considerable amount was spent weekly in out-relief. The Poor Rates in 1814 were reduced—St. Michael's to 7s. 6d., and Holy Trinity to 4s. 6d. in the pound; but in 1817, they had increased to—St. Michael's 19s., and Holy Trinity to 13s. 9d. in the pound.

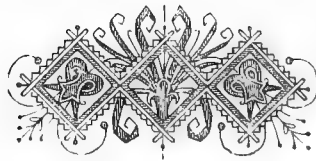
Mr. W. Cobbett, in describing a journey this year from London to Liverpool, tells—

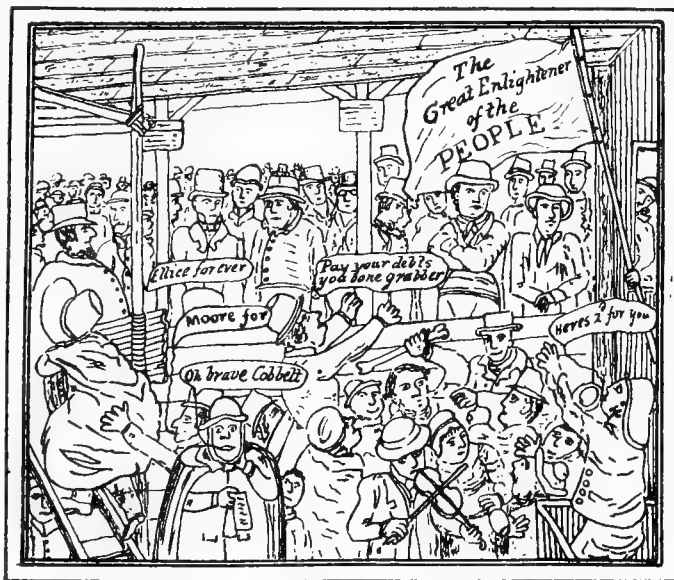
"I and my two sons, William and John, set off from London early in the morning of Saturday, the 22nd March. Of the whole country through which we passed, and all of which was very fine, we were most delighted with eleven miles from Dunchurch to Coventry. The road was very wide

and smooth, rows of fine trees on the sides of it, beautiful white-thorn hedges ; the fields so neatly kept, the soil so rich, the herds and flocks of fine fat cattle and sheep on every side ; the beautiful homesteads and numerous stacks of wheat, every object seemed to say : ' Here are resources, here is wealth, here are all the means of national power and of individual happiness.' And yet, at the end of those eleven beautiful miles, covered with all the means of affording luxury of diet and in dress, we entered that City of Coventry, which, out of *twenty thousand inhabitants*, contained at that very moment *eight thousand miserable paupers*, a fact which we well know, not only from the petition just presented to Parliament, but also from a detailed official account." And he adds : " One of the Members for which formerly public-spirited, but now miserable, City, Butterworth, had voted for all the recent measures of Government, and had been one of the most active, though the most silent, enemies of the cause of Reform."

In March, Mr. Moore was presented with a gold cup, subscribed for by over 2,000 of the inhabitants, who desired to show their thorough appreciation of his faithful services.

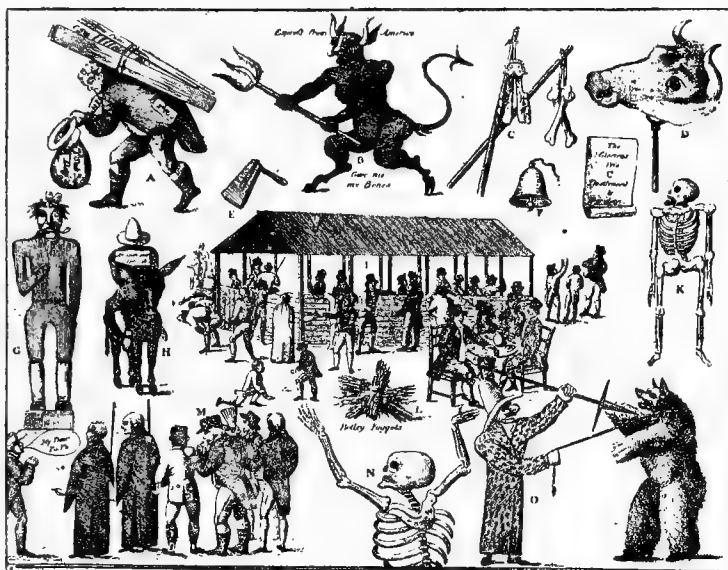
The Cheylesmore estate was sold by the Crown to the Marquis of Hertford, to pay off the land-tax upon other property of the Prince of Wales, and thus, after nearly five hundred years, the connection of Coventry with the Crown ceased, in entire opposition to the will of the original grantor, and the total ignorance of any rights possessed by Coventry citizens. Tradition says it was lost in a gambling transaction by Prince George, when at Combe Abbey a few years before, where His Royal Highness and the Marquis had placed two caterpillars on a table, and staked large odds upon their racing capabilities. The Prince's caterpillar not travelling so quickly as he wished, His Royal Highness pricked it with a pin, and stopped its going altogether, when his opponent won the estate. There is doubtless no truth in such an absurd story.





THE NOMINATION OF MESSRS. MOORE, ELLICE, AND COBBETT, AT
THE HUSTINGS.

(From the Collection of the late W. READER, Esq., in the Bodleian Library, Oxford.)



COBBETT AT COVENTRY.

A, Cobbett carrying off the bones of Paine. **B**, The devil pursuing Cobbett to recover his property. **C**, Bones exhibited at the Hustings in derision. **D**, Emblematical of the head of a Traitor. **E**, Watchman's Rattle used to arouse Mr. Cobbett's friends. **F**, Bell used by the collector of bones. **G**, Knave's Post, a friend of Cobbett's. **H**, An ass, a present for Cobbett to ride upon from the booth. **I**, the opponents of Cobbett amusing themselves at the Hustings. **K**, A mock skeleton of Tom Paine. **L**, Faggotts to remind Mr. Cobbett of one of his Botley manœuvres. **M**, Cobbett led away from the Hustings by his friends fainting. **N**, An Emblematical figure of Death (painted) to remind Mr. Cobbett of his latter end. **O**, A Radical, with his staff, exhibiting a monster.

(From the Author's Collection.)

CHAPTER LXII.

"RICH RUFFIANS" AND "RIPPING SAVAGES": A ROWDY ELECTION.

George IV. (1820).

Death of George III.—Messrs. Ellice and Moore's addresses—Mr. William Cobbett, a candidate—Account of his doings—"Nabob"—Tom Paine's bones—Electioneering on the cheap—"The Resurrection Man"—Cobbett's public entry—"Rich ruffians"—"Drunken savages"—Mr. Sergeant's windows smashed—Public arrival of Ellice and Moore—The Botley manœuvres—An imaginary letter—Captain H. J. Close, a Corporation candidate—Cobbett's proposal to him—Refused by the Town Clerk—Commencement of the poll—A character procession—"Ballad for the Booth"—Retirement of the Captain—Cobbett's threat—An attack upon him—How he was rescued—Specials and their Chief—The old Blues gain possession of the booth—Daily state of the poll—The onset at Mr. Sergeant's house—Cobbett's accusation against Ellice—Election abruptly ended—Messrs. Ellice and Moore chosen—A case of desertion—Cartoons—Chairing.

GEORGE III. died the 29th of January, 1820, and Parliament ended a month after. Messrs. Ellice and Moore issued their addresses, and Mr. William Cobbett came to Coventry, where his friends in London had predicted that the tall, athletic, and vituperative editor of the "Political Register" would find many supporters. The Corporation appeared to have little chance of securing candidates, and a few in their Chamber would have adopted Cobbett, but the greater majority were against it, "well knowing that this Jack-of-all-trades man, who had been ploughboy, gardener, clerk, soldier, writer, farmer, bookseller, and publisher—first editor of the Tory 'Porcupine,' and afterwards of the Radical 'Weekly Register'—would, if elected, turn upon their interests if it suited his purpose to do so." Mr. Ellice might be in their eyes "a stock jobber" and a "lord's relation;" Mr. Moore "the manager at Drury Lane" and an "East Indian Nabob;" and to use Cobbett's adapted rhythm—

"When master served in England's crew,
He said to Peter, 'black my shoe,'
To which he answered, 'Ay, Bob,'
But when returned from India's land,
And grown too proud to brook command,
He sternly answered, 'Nabob.'"

Still, both attended to their duties in Parliament, and placing party considerations aside, were better than the political agitator who "brought over the bones of Tom Paine from America, wished the public to subscribe (and entrust him therewith) a sum of money, under pretence of building a monument here for the rascal's bones; and who begged

at twopence per head from 600,000 men, women, and children, and required that sum to be ready by the end of February to form a fund for securing his election." Rotherham, the printer, published the following, entitled

"THE RESURRECTION MAN.

So Ho! Mr. '*Grave-digger*'—How do ye do?
 With your long string of whack botheration!
 Who'd have thought we should e'er be indebted to you
 To remove all the cares of the nation?

And pray, sir, what fool recommended you here,
 With your Radical, democrat stuff?
 By my soul I advise you from Coventry steer—
 Or you'll meet with a terrible huff.

Come, none of your blarney—'twill never avail,
 With our Coventry Britons, d'ye see—
 For we are the boys who will never turn tail,
 While the land of our fathers is free!

So pack up your '*bones*,' sir, as soon as you can,
 For no '*Rads*' can our loyalty shake—
 Or should you prefer, we will '*hunt*' you, old man,
 Like a bullock tied fast to a stake.

If so—keep the booth, and we'll show you such fun
 As shall fill your stout heart with dismay;
 And convince you, old '*Bone Merchant*' e'er we have done,
 In his turn, '*ev'ry dog has his day*.'

Let Britons still loyal and happy remain,
 And defy all your *jargon* to shake 'em—
 Or should they *forget* (their allegiance, I mean),
 May a good cat-o'-nine-tails awake 'em.

Farewell, *Mr. Cobbett*—I wish you could see
 What folly has prompted you on—
 Still, our King, Constitution, and Country for me,
 And for Cobbett—a dot and go *one!*"

Alluding to his public entry on the 29th of February, Cobbett, in "the History of the Coventry Election," says—

"I was drawn through all the principal streets, which did not occupy a space of much less than two hours, on a frosty evening, part after sunset. The acclamations were so general and so hearty; the enthusiasm so great; the words, as well as actions, of the mass of the people so clearly expressive of ardent attachment to the cause of which I was the representative, that it was not being at all credulous to suppose that corruption, however foul and persevering, would be unable to produce finally a successful resistance against me. However, I resolved to proceed with caution, but as my cold and my most unfortunate hoarseness wholly disqualified me for a canvass in person, I was compelled to rely on the reports of others, which were, however, all favourable, and all fully warranted by every indication whereon a judgment might reasonably be formed. The savage violence of our enemies was no bad sign of the fairness of our prospect. This began to show itself on the very night of my arrival. Our friends, satisfied with the victory of the day, had retired to their homes, when the *savages* who had been hired by the band of *rich ruffians* sallied forth, dashed in the windows of the house of Mr. Sergeant [in Earl Street], at which I was, and made many brutal attacks upon individuals whom they took unawares in the streets or at public-houses. Even at this early period they cut several persons with knives, and there is no doubt in my mind that they were furnished with knives by their employers, for the express purpose of being used in

cutting and stabbing. This supposition may by some be thought monstrous, but the facts which have since come out fully warrant it. I am ashamed to relate these things of Englishmen, who have heretofore been famed for fair play; but I must relate them, or not do justice to my own friends at Coventry, who, though full of honest zeal, never thought of carrying an election at the point of the knife. The knives appear to have been all of one sort, or nearly so—stout pen-knives, with sharp points. I saw two drunken *savages*, carter fellows, brandishing each a knife of this sort in the face of the hustings, and threatening to rip my voters up."

Messrs. Moore and Ellice came to Coventry on the 6th, and made a public entry. According to Cobbett, "the *rich ruffians* themselves turned out on horseback, armed with staves," when, "guarded by this species of Yeomanry Cavalry, the two stupid heroes entered the Town," and as a signal of their arrival, "their *hired savages*" again dashed in the windows of Mr. Sergeant, which had been mended after the former attack.

Parties remained quiet from Tuesday night until Monday, 6th of March, although a whole forest of bills appeared. Mr. Cobbett, suffering from a cold, issued long statements of his views, which were answered by Jonathan Chambers, a local tradesman. The dark Blues made the most of a case which had been brought against Mr. Cobbett and two other persons of Botley, for the assault and false imprisonment of one Burgess (whose brother, Jesse Burgess, had been in Mr. Cobbett's employ, which case being tried in the Winchester Summer Assizes of 1809, had resulted in Mr. Cobbett being fined £10), in spite of Cobbett's bringing down the real Jesse Burgess to refute certain statements. Curious and suppositious letters were published by Turner, purporting to be written in the native Hampshire dialect. Here is one of them—

"Coventry, Marche Thirde.

"To Mister Jonathan Chambers.

"Sur,—Measter be'en vere busey to-day, he tells me to write to your honor in his sted. He says how he have a gret respect for all haberdashers, ande that you be a vere goode haberdasher, bot a vere bad riter—and I wishes you to git one ov measter's grammer bookes, and then you vool not vant to goo to the layer to git un to correct your riten—and I hears as how you gives men buttered ale to make um fite, bot wen measter used to give men ale in hamsheer, he did it out ov his ween pocket, and not out ov aney Fund raised for the releef ov the poor—and I hopes your honor wool excuse me, as I be'nt a scollard much moor than your honor; and I wants a pare ov gloves thes could weather, and vool call to by some ov your honor—I hear as how your honor zays as I be'nt the trew Jesse Burgess, bot if you wool goo to Mister Copes, neer the Churchyarde, I a' got a cozen whoo hides ther, and he knows that I be the real Jesse Burgess.

"I bee your honor's humbel savant,
JESSE BURGESS."

The Corporation were anxious to secure a candidate, and consulted with the Ministry. On the 7th March they obtained the services of Mr. Henry Jackson Close, of Ladywood, Birmingham, whose address appeared that day. He was an officer in the Army, and had served in India and the Peninsula. Forthwith his opponents found fault with him for being a soldier. He defended himself, asserting that his profession and residence in India had made him acquainted with trade. Mr. Cobbett knew that if he could get the interests of the Corporation joined to his own, his chance of success would improve, and therefore proposed a coalition of their cause, but Mr. Close rejected the offer, and in the "History," Cobbett says—

"If Captain Close, who appeared to be a very good and frank man, had listened to a proposition of mine, both *the humbugs* would have been packed off on the Thursday. But the Town Clerk, who, I suppose, spoke for the Corporation, would not let him agree to it."

The opening of the poll was fixed for Wednesday morning, the 8th. Excitement increased as the day progressed, and the dark Blues paraded strange figures through the Town to disgrace Cobbett. A Freemen tells how human bones were stolen from the north crypt of St. Michael's Church, and made up to represent Tom Paine's skeleton. At the close of the first day's poll Cobbett had first place, to the surprise of the dark Blues. In the evening the following "Ballad for the Booth" appeared—

"What is that fellow perched up in the booth?
Hark! Moore and Ellice, all that's bad he calls?
Who are they with him, too rough to be smooth?
'Tis "*Botanist*" Cobbett, and *Corps of Radicals*!
Strike up the tune that we play'd before,
Shew them that we value them not a fig again!
Bundle out Cobbett and shut the door,
And then play up the *Jeffery-Barlow jig again*!
Barlow—we'll jig it! Jefferys—fig it!
Play the *Jeffery-Barlow jig again*:
Rally, and jig it! Fig it! Jig it!
O! the rare *Jeffery-Barlow jig again*!

Give us no more of your hisses and groans,
Men *very bad* can't bear such clattering;
Cobbett's afflicted with *Paine* in the *Bones*
And a very bad cold: it has stopped his chattering!
What's to be done, *Femmy*? * *Grant* thine aid!
Like *Moore* and *Ellice*, when low thine attitude,
Grant-ing thee help, when of *duns* afraid—
And now, *Radical-like*, thou dost show thy gratitude!
Bones they will clatter, Cobbett will chatter!
James will also change his attitude!
Bones they will clatter! matter! Chatter!
Femmy has *Grant*-ed and proved his gratitude!

Sergeant's and Corporals orders attend!
'Well armed with stones, from *ambush* fall o' them!
Let not a *Radical* throw a *brick-end*,
Till the *whole* bricks are expended all o' them!
Radicals, would you the *cause* ensure,
Begging your *twopence* ne'er deem a robbery?
Gathering *Bones* and to fleece the poor,
Cannot be *theft*! They are—but a *fob*-bery!
Give it to Cobbett! *Trust him*—he'll *fob* it!
Twopence borrow'd is no robbery;
Hold it fast, Cobbett! Rob it! Fob it!
Take them all in, and a fig for robbery!"

Captain Close found it hopeless to proceed, for being unknown, and having made no personal canvass, laid him at a great disadvantage. Mr. Moore's agent, Mr. Pearman, had a conference with Mr. Close's representatives, to obtain that gentleman's withdrawal, whereat it was agreed to pay the Captain's expenses, and thus sooner put an end to the election. Mr. Close retired on the 10th. Mr. Cobbett now threatened to inflict the fourteen days polling, as allowed by law; and his "History" proceeds—

* Mr. James Grant, Chairman of Mr. Cobbett's committee.

"On the Thursday the *savages* came well fed and well supplied, all the day long, with *gin* and *brandy*, brought out to them in glass bottles, and handed about from one to the other in the face of the booth, where a scene of violence and sounds of execration were witnessed and heard, such as, I hope, were never matched, and never will be again matched, in the world. I that day saw above twenty of my voters actually torn away from the polling place, and ripped up behind, and stripped of their coats, and sometimes even of their waistcoats! Nevertheless, in spite of all this destruction; in spite of blows, ripping up, and even stabs, my voters persevered to such a degree, as to put me nearly on a level with my opponents at the close of the poll; and if the *infirm persons*, whom I had got into the booth, had been permitted to poll, I should have stood *above Moore* at the end of the second day. I had about twenty of these in the booth ready to poll. These (for what reason I never could discover) were not permitted to poll. They were, after long waiting, got away in safety, but they never dared to venture to come up again. It was now clearly seen that *I had the votes*; and, therefore, unless these votes could be *prevented from being given*, it was clear that I must be seated in Parliament, especially as no one act had been committed by me or by my friends of an unlawful or violent nature. Therefore, grand preparations were made by the *Rich Ruffians* for the next day. They, indeed, had done much on the day just closed. We saw, during the afternoon, several fresh *bands of savages* arrive from the country by *sixes, eights, or tens*; so that, by the hour of closing the poll, an immense multitude of these wretches, roaring like wolves, and foaming with rage and drink, were collected round the booth.

"This evening, Ellice went out of the booth in great dudgeon. I, not suspecting any attempt against me personally, followed, at a few paces distance, intending to go the house of a Mr. Grant, where my Committee was, and which might be about forty yards from the booth. I had to pass through the *bands of savages*, and I was scarcely amongst them, when they (at Ellice's instigation) began an endeavour to *press me down*. They were more than a *thousand* in number, including the mere partizans of my enemies. Several attempts were made to press me down. I got many blows in the sides; and if I had been either a *short* or a *weak* man, I must have been pressed under foot and inevitably killed. However, the crowd took a sway towards a row of houses standing on a pavement above the level of area of the open street, or sort of square. With a good deal of difficulty I reached the pavement, keeping my feet. I had, when I left the booth, my snuff-box in my right hand; it is oblong square, and has very sharp corners. The *savages* pressed me sideways towards my left, and I had to fight with my right hand in order to prevent them from getting me down. I had to strike back-handed. One of the sharp corners of the snuff-box, which stuck out beyond the bottom of my little finger, did good service. It cut the noses and eyes of the *savages* at a famous rate, and assisted mainly in securing my safe arrival on the raised pavement, on which I got just opposite to the door of a shop. Just at this time one of the *savages*, foaming at the mouth like a mad dog, exclaimed: '*Hang him! I'll rip him up!*' He was running his hand into his breeches pocket, apparently to take out his *knife*, but I; being pulled up to the doorway by the left arm by two young women, who wished, I suppose, to get me into the house; drew up my right leg, armed with a new and sharp-edged gallashe over my boot, dealt Mr. Ellice's *ripping savage* so delightful a blow just between his two eyes, that he fell back upon his followers. For this I should certainly have been killed in a few moments had not Mr. Frank Sergeant, who, seeing my danger, made shift to get along by the side of the houses to the spot where I was, happily came to my assistance. Never did I behold a more gallant young man than this! Having got to me, he turned round, saying, 'Follow me, Sir!' and having first beaten back three or four of the *savages*, so as to make them press upon others behind them, the whole body which were on the pavement turned about, while he, with thumps on some with his hands, with kicks bestowed upon others, set the body on a swag towards the house of Mr. Grant, at which we arrived quickly in safety."

The Corporation had sworn many special constables, some of whom the Chief, Mr. J. Goodal, had recruited from the gaol, and the low quarters of the Town. They were taken before an Alderman and sworn in, their duty assigned to them, and furnished with a staff and badge; they received two shillings per day for their exertions, provided they brought those articles back safely. Mr. Cobbett demanded protection for his voters from the Mayor, for the dark Blue party were bent upon obtaining possession of the booth, and soon gained it. The hustings sloped down Cross Cheaping, and the Cobbett party were forced from the front by the superior strength of their opponents. The second day's poll resulted—Ellice 198, Moore 179, Cobbett 151, Close 94; the third day—Ellice 395, Moore 371, Cobbett 206, Close 102; and the fourth day's poll, on

Saturday, the 11th, terminated—Ellice 727, Moore 692, Cobbett 352, Close 114.

"Cobbett tells us that the scenes exhibited were much the same as before, but that many of those amongst his opponents mob, having 'become hoarse, were seen moving their lips, instead of being heard. His voters were not allowed to vote, driven from the booth, and the freedom of election again interfered with.'

"Mr. Cobbett, however, determined to keep open the poll during the next week, and the Moore and Ellice party, exasperated, conceived the idea of driving him out of the City, and proceeded to Mr. Sergeant's house with the evident intention of mischief. They first dashed in the upper room windows, and some foolish person in the house retaliated, and a dreadful row ensued, when the shutters of the ground floor room and the windows were smashed. Forcing the door, they broke into the house, whilst others, scaling the wall, got in by way of the garden. Cobbett was in a bedroom, with his daughter, when some of his supporters came running up for the poker and tongs, to use for defence. The party in the house were unarmed, but with Mr. Frank Sergeant at their head, they faced the mob in the passage armed with pokers; whilst Cobbett, *valiant man!* 'fixed the bedstead in a way to let the door open no wider than to admit one man only at a time, and stood with a sword to send the first that should enter to receive from the Devil the arrears that might be due to him on account of his services to Moore and Ellice,' and having pulled off his coat, 'was prepared to give, with a clear conscience, as hearty a thrust as was ever given by man' And he adds: 'My *philosophy* despised the brutes, but to have one's throat cut by them would have been just a little too bad.' Meanwhile, the tumult in the passage was quelled, but not without one man being stabbed twice in the arm."

This attack had the effect of intimidating some of Cobbett's Freemen from polling during the next few days, and if they presented themselves they ran considerable risk. Cobbett made out that Mr. Ellice greatly aided the rioters in this attack upon him, and substantiated it by evidence, but his party were undoubtedly the original aggressors.

The end of the fifth day's poll was—Ellice 1,147, Moore 1,108, Cobbett 485; on the sixth—Ellice 1,423, Moore 1,377, Cobbett 516. During these days the dark Blues had possession of both sides of the booth, and now, by the agency of Mr. Pearman, an agreement was come to, whereby the polling was brought to an abrupt end on the 15th, and considerable expense saved to Messrs. Moore and Ellice. Cobbett left for Meriden, and

EDWARD ELLICE, ESQ., AND PETER MOORE, ESQ., again became Members. There were now 2,016 Freemen polled, and the final state, published by W. Rotherham, printer, Fleet Street, gives the following numbers—

| | | | | | |
|---------|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|
| Ellice | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1474 |
| Moore | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1422 |
| Cobbett | ... | ... | ... | ... | 517 |
| Close | ... | ... | ... | ... | 149 |

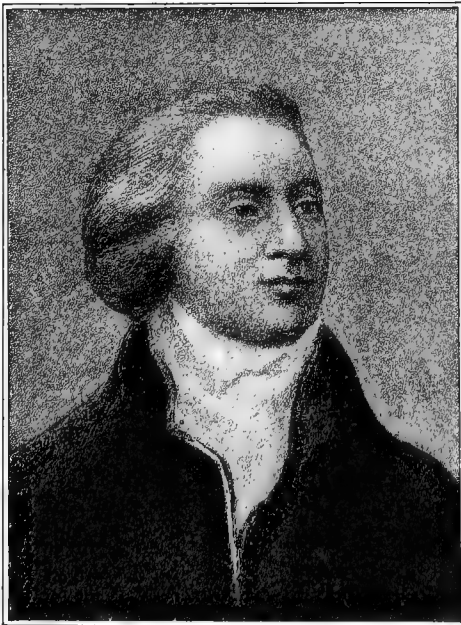
This bill was now issued, entitled—

"Coventry Hustings. WILLIAM COBBETT, Late a Sergeant in the 54th Regiment. Ran away this morning, from the Radical recruiting party, stationed at Coventry, the above-named William Cobbett, who has taken in the recruits whom he had enlisted under false pretences, by which they have been deprived of six days subsistence. The notorious old offender is supposed to have left Coventry this morning on his *return to America*, having finished his last seditious effort in England. Whoever will lodge him in the Radical Guard Room shall be thanked by his deluded followers, who beg the pardon of the loyal subjects of Coventry for their late disgraceful conduct in supporting this deserter."

There were several cartoons issued at this election, which illustrate its humours. The charring took place on Friday, the 17th.



WILLIAM COBBETT, Esq.
Parliamentary Candidate for Coventry, 1820.



WILLIAM MILLS, Esq.
M.P. for Coventry, 1805.



FRANCIS CHARLES SEYMOUR CONWAY,
Marquis and Earl of Hertford.
Recorder of Coventry, 1825-6.

CHAPTER LXIII.

THE CASE OF THE COVENTRY FREEHOLDERS.

George IV., continued (1820 to 1824)

Warwickshire General Election, 1820—Resignation of Sir Charles Mordaunt—The November bye-election—Mr. F. Lawley and Mr. R. Spooner, candidates—A curious find—Right of polling—Demanded by Coventry Freeholders—But refused by the Sheriff—Lawley elected—Mr. Spooner's petition—The case in Committee of the House—Decided against the Coventry Freeholders—Mr. Lawley declared elected—Local sympathy for Queen Caroline—Presentations to Her Majesty—The King's Coronation celebration—The County Gaol Act—Abandoned—The General Gaol Act—New gaol built.

DUGDALE STRATFORD DUGDALE, Esq., and Sir Charles Mordaunt, Bart., were returned for the County of Warwick at the General Election in March, 1820, but the latter accepted the Stewardship of the Chiltern Hundreds. An election ensued, at which Francis Lawley, Esq. ("an old-fashioned Whig") and Richard Spooner, Esq. ("then a young man of rather Radical tendencies") were candidates, upon the 31st of October, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 6th, and 7th November, when; according to the poll taken by Christopher Robert Wren, Esq., the Sheriff; Mr. Lawley polled 2,153, against 979 for Mr. Spooner. The right to vote at Coventry had been from time immemorial in the Freemen alone, and the Freeholders did not vote for their freeholds in the City, or County of the City. Mr. Charles Lilly, and the Spooner portion, were desirous of polling at the Warwickshire election, and were in force. A few years ago, in the repairs of St. Michael's Church, a copy of the following bill was found attached to the lead work over the South aisle—

"WARWICKSHIRE ELECTION.—The Freeholders of the City of Coventry, in the interest of Mr. Spooner, are requested to assemble in front of the County Hall, prepared to proceed from thence to Warwick, precisely at 8 o'clock on Thursday morning. It is hoped each gentleman will provide himself with a mazarine favour or laurel.

"Craven Arms, Wednesday, Nov. 2nd, 1820.

Turner, Printer."

On the Coventry Freeholders presenting themselves, their votes were disallowed; and after the election Mr. Spooner presented a petition, declaring "that the Sheriff and Returning Officer at such election refused the votes of divers persons, Freeholders of the said County (Warwick), who had a right to vote at the said election, and who were desirous of voting, and had on that occasion tendered their votes for the petitioner." Mr. Spooner further stated that by these means a "colourable majority" had been obtained for Mr. Lawley, who had thereby been illegally elected, and asked that that gentleman's name should be erased from the return, and his own placed in stead thereof.

The Committee to try the petition met on the 9th of May, 1821, the Marquis of Titchfield in the chair, Messrs. W. Harrison and U. Corbett being counsel for the plaintiff, and W. E. Taunton and J. Pearson, Esqrs., counsel for the defence. The case was fully argued, and an account of the proceedings will be found in Mr. Ulvedale Corbett's "Inquiry into the Elective Franchise, &c., in England and Wales." The weakness of the petitioners case was in their being unable to produce evidence that the Freeholders of Coventry had ever exercised the right of voting for the County of Warwick for nearly 400 years, or since the charter of Henry VI. (1451), and in the end the Committee resolved "that the right of voting for Knights of the Shire for the County of Warwick is in the Freeholders for the County of Warwick only; and that no person, in virtue of any freehold situate in the County of the City of Coventry, had any right to vote at any election of the Members of the County of Warwick." Mr. Lawley was declared elected.

Caroline, consort of George IV., having remained some years abroad, in consequence of the separation between them, now returned to England to claim her right as Queen. Coventry men were no passive spectators to the Bill instituted in the Lords against her, their sympathy was with the Queen, and no less than 17,000 persons, out of a population of 21,000, are said to have signed the address to her, which, with an elaborate and beautiful piece of ribbon, woven in the City, and paid for by subscriptions, was sent to her on the 10th of October, 1820. When the Bill was withdrawn on the 10th of November, there was considerable rejoicing, with ox and sheep roastings, and illuminations. Lord Hood, of Whitley Abbey, and the Honourable Kepeel Craven, of Combe, being in close attendance on Her Majesty, took an interest in these proceedings, and in June the next year a gold watch, of Coventry manufacture, was presented to the Queen by the inhabitants, bearing the following inscription:—"Presented to Her Majesty Queen Caroline, as a mark of their esteem for her character, and admiration of her conduct under unmerited persecution." On the 19th of July; the date of the King's Coronation; the Corporation, Companies, and inhabitants celebrated the event, and a public procession took place.


The Grand Jury at the Coventry Spring Assizes, 1819, had represented the old gaol to be insufficient for its purpose, and the Corporation obtained an Act of Parliament, 1822-3 (3 Geo. 4), in order to build a new one upon some lands the property of the Marquis of Hertford and others, without the City. Opponents objected that the site was a bad one, both "damp and unfit," but withdrew their opposition, and the Bill passed. Meanwhile, the General Gaol Act (4 Geo., 4 c., 64) became law, and gave increased powers to Magistrates; when, as the building of the new gaol had not commenced, the scheme was given up, and land adjoining the old prison purchased by the Corporation to build a new gaol in place of the old one.

CHAPTER LXIV.

THE RECIPROCITY ACT AND THE RIBBON TRADE.

George IV., continued (1824 to 1826).

Mr. Huskisson's Reciprocity Act—And the silk trade—The days of Protection—Petitions against the Act—Admission of foreign silks—Extension of time allowed—Further petitions—A dread of coming evil—Mr. Ellice's speech—Moves for an enquiry—Commissioners at Coventry—Manufacturers drawbacks—Cobbett's political planks—"Annual Parliaments and Universal Suffrage"—Opposition of the Freemen thereto—Death of Recorder, Earl Craven—Francis, Marquis of Hertford, chosen—Growing desire for new Members—Hints at opposition—Mr. Pearman's retreat to the enemy—Candidates wanted to oppose Catholic claims—Handbill warfare.

OMMERCIAL reform was required, and Mr. Huskisson, a member of the Government and the President of the Board of Trade, proposed the Reciprocity Act, whereby the Coventry ribbon trade was affected. It has been shown that the craft owed its origin in the City to the political circumstances which in 1685 had driven 70,000 French Protestants to seek refuge in this country, some of whom, settling at Coventry, aided the establishment of the silk trade; which, although dependent upon fashion, was early found could compete with the manufacture of the ribbons from France, and for half a century they were, with the other silk-made goods of this country, submitted in competition with the manufactured articles of France and Italy. In 1768, foreign silk manufactures were totally prohibited, under heavy penalties, and the home market increased, but an export trade, chiefly to America, greatly declined. Protection of home industry was considered absolutely necessary; it was desired to obtain an excessive monopoly of foreign trade, in order to strike a blow at a rival power, and to exclude the foreigner from the home markets and the Colonies.

For nearly sixty years prohibition of foreign silk goods continued, but in 1823, Mr. Huskisson brought forward his measure altering the Protective laws; and in March, the weavers of Coventry petitioned against the admission of French and other foreign wrought silks into Great Britain, considering that it would ruin their trade, and the Members also presented a sympathetic Town's petition. The Bill passed, and the prohibition system came to an end; it allowed silk goods to be admitted, at a duty of about 30 per cent. *ad valorem*; but through a motion of Mr. Ellice's, an extended period of two and a half years was given, before the same came into operation (July, 1826). Improvements of

machinery and the Jacquard loom considerably altered affairs. During the interval, the reduced price of silk stimulated the Coventry trade, but manufacturers and workpeople were apprehensive of the ill results of the introduction of foreign wrought silk into England upon their trade, and in February, 1826, petitioned the Lords, through the Recorder, and the Commons by the Members, praying Parliament to consider the misery and distress prevailing in the City and neighbourhood, "occasioned by the apprehension of the injurious effects upon the ribbon trade by the introduction of foreign manufactured ribbons into this country," but the full force of the competition was not felt until 1828. Mr. Ellice, on presenting the petition, was of opinion that the Act for the Adjustment of the Currency and the Repeal of the Corn Laws should have preceded the removal of Protection, and moved for a Select Committee to enquire into the state of the silk trade. Speaking of Coventry, Mr. Ellice said—

"Much has been done during the last two years of introducing improvements, and time and encouragement are now alone wanting to give confidence for the application of capital. One workman can now produce, with the improved engine loom lately adopted, six times the ribbons he could before time with the single-hand loom. Three-fourths of the looms of Coventry are yet of inefficient description, most of which are the only property the operative weaver has. Their buildings and houses are adapted to this machinery, and must be altered to suit the engine loom, whilst in the present state of trade, and the apprehension of immediate introduction of foreign goods, both manufacturers and weavers are unable to invest capital in alterations without the assurance of protection."

Commissioners were appointed to take an account of the stock of the Coventry manufacturers, which, says the Collier MSS. diary before quoted, was weighed; "five shillings in the pound weight being allowed on the silk and ribbons as a drawback to the masters to prevent their suffering by the Bill, whilst to the workmen came nothing but loss, with reduced wages." In time partial confidence asserted itself, but the feeling of being handicapped still remained with maker and weaver.

Two planks of Cobbett's political platform had been "Annual Parliaments and Universal Suffrage," which raised opposition from the Freemen, who deemed that if an Act of the kind was passed, the exclusive right of voting, for which they in the present, and their forefathers in past generations, had served "seven long years," would be stultified by the admission of property owners and others to the franchise. At Coventry, in a measure, there was an extended suffrage, whilst other places were restricted; and where many boroughs polled but hundreds at an election, the City's register of Freemen showed nearly 3,500 voters. Such doctrines as those advanced by Cobbett would lose a candidate's chance, and the interference with the right to vote was ever zealously guarded by its owners.

Lord Craven died on July 30th, 1825, at Cowes, aged 54, and his remains were removed from the Isle of Wight to Combe Abbey, and buried at Binley Church. The duties of Recorder were now but nominal, and the Corporation unanimously chose Francis Charles Seymour Conway, Marquis of Hertford, to the office.

The alarm of the Coventry weaver for his trade through the new Act caused considerable trouble, and dissatisfaction was expressed against the representatives. The "Coventry Mercury," in June, 1824, had asked the Freemen not to engage their votes, as their old friend, Mr. W. W. Bird, would be nominated at the next election. Mr. Bird, however, disclaimed all knowledge, and from Cape Town, where official duty had placed him, soon after repudiated all ideas of causing disruption among the "Independent Blues." Mr. Mark Pearman, who had been instrumental in conducting the elections at Coventry since 1790 for Mr. Bird, Mr. Moore, and Mr. Ellice, inserted a letter in the "John Bull" newspaper, on the 25th of September, declaring that the conduct of the two representatives had been such that he, together with the Freemen of Coventry and London, would oppose their re-election, asserting that if two Protestant candidates, supporters of the present Ministry, and opposed to the Catholic question, would offer themselves in the Independent interest, their success would be assured. The letter came as a thunderbolt to the party, and Mr. Jonathan Chambers, a loquacious haberdasher, and other doughty champions of Messrs. Moore and Ellice, took up their representatives cause, and a very verbose handbill war was the result, wherein both parties spilt a quantity of printers ink.



CHAPTER *¶* LXV.

A BATTLE OF THE BLUES.

George IV., continued (1826).

Dissolution of Parliament—Measures—Unpopularity of Moore and Ellice—Searching for candidates—Mimic addresses—Writs received—Preparations—Light Blue mob in strength—"Why should a wretched weaver fill his skin with gin"—Mr. T. B. Fyler, a light Blue candidate—His arrival and address—"Gratifying intelligence"—Mr. R. E. Heathcote, the second light Blue candidate—Messrs. Ellice and Moore's late arrival—Mr. Moore at the Craven—Refused hearing by the light Blue mob—Mr. Heathcote's public entry—The nomination—In favour of Fyler and Heathcote—Mr. Moore's threat against Magistrates—His infliction of "the long oaths"—First day's polling—Possession nine points of the law—Candidates and Catholic claims—"Latimer" thereon—London Freemen—Sales by auction—Daily proceedings and polling—"The Hearty Good Fellow"—Moore and Ellice gain ground—Their attempts at the booth—Proceedings thereat—Further pollings—Mr. Ellice and the Dis-senters—Opponents bills—End of polling—How caused—Final return—Threats of proceedings.



PARLIAMENT which had effected important changes in the foreign and domestic policy of this country came to an end on June 2nd, 1826, and the elections which followed were conducted more as a struggle for measures than parties. The Corn Laws, Catholic Emancipation, and the Slave Trade were the chief questions at issue, for Reform was hardly ripe; but, at Coventry, whilst the Tories made capital out of the Radical, or Cobbett, party's dislike to the representatives; advantage was taken of Messrs. Moore and Ellice's unpopularity with the weavers on the subject of the relaxing the prohibitory system on the importation of foreign silk goods, for the hands thought their Members had done more for the masters than for themselves.

The addresses of the old Members appeared on 29th May, and an announcement of opposition stated that "two gentlemen of Independent principles, and unconnected with any party, would offer themselves," and shortly appear in the weavers interests. Mr. Ellice in vain tried to reason; it was clear he and Mr. Moore had lost caste. The Corporation and others were endeavouring to find candidates, and Mr. Pearman was asked to bring out his "non-Popery" men, but as they did not appear, the mimic addresses of Christopher Woodhouse and John Sammons, two well-known eccentric local characters, were issued, to the amusement of the inhabitants.

The arrival of the writs on Monday, June 5th, prepared the City for the election, and a hustings was hastily erected in Cross Cheaping in the usual constitutional manner,

whereat the candidates could talk if they were able, or pose as a cockshy for the mob to pelt at. Things began to look rosy for the electors, and whilst on Tuesday evening the partizans of Messrs. Moore and Ellice (dark Blues) were entertained at different inns, "by public subscription;" Mr. Ellice desiring to spend very little money unless obliged; the other side, yet without candidates, set their publicans taps running. Votes and voters were in great demand, philanthropy became general, Aldermen and merchants "hob-nobbed" with the lower order of Freemen, and whilst the women were kissed and the children made a fuss of, the men got into a state of chronic intoxication. Mobs, chiefly of non-electors, now had a chance of showing their interest in public affairs, and during the evening of the 6th, an immense concourse of light Blues, aided by music and Ward flags, paraded the streets, exhibiting a large bottle reversed on a pole, in remembrance of an expression used by Mr. Ellice in the House respecting artisans spending their superfluous money in gin shops. "Old Times" says—

"Why should a wretched weaver fill his skin with gin?
To squander thus his wages is a downright sin;
You all must know these things for weavers were not sent;
For their liberal masters only were they meant."

Whilst "Commisserator" writes impromptu—

"Says Harry to Tom: 'Things look very queer!
No bread! No meat! No cheese! No beer!
The men say all's lately been "quite wrong" within,
Since *Ellice* has said there shall be *no more* gin.'

O dear! what can the matter be!
Now we're deprived of our gin!
We'll soon send Master *Ellice* back again,
As soon as he dares come within."

A large crowd of Freemen were collected at mid-day on Wednesday near the King's Head, and Mr. Charles Woodcock, in addressing them, desired to know whether they were dissatisfied with their present representatives, and after loud cries of "We are! we are! we are!" asked if they wished for one or two new Members, and a unanimous show of hands decided that two were required. He declared that "two Independent gentlemen of fortune" would soon offer themselves, but he was then unable to name them. The light Blue mob again met at the same place at three, and, with the Mayor and several members of the Corporation with him, Mr. Woodcock was still unable to name the candidates, who were expected hourly. The mob again assembled on Thursday morning, and it was announced that the services of Mr. Thomas Bilcliffe Fyler, a military gentleman, had been secured. Messrs. Woodcock and Carter spoke, and Mr. Pearman, who for three weeks had incessantly laboured to obtain opposition candidates, declared that "as for Peter Moore, they might as well elect the ex-Member for Radford, for instead of attending to the interests of his constituents, his time was entirely occupied amongst his Joint Stock and Bubble Companies."

Mr. Fyler's address was promptly issued. He was against granting political power to Roman Catholics, and professing himself to be attached to "the true principles" of the Constitution, and above all, to those which form the basis of the "Liberties of the People," promised that if elected, it should be his particular care to watch over his constituents interests. At six o'clock he addressed the Freemen from the King's Head balcony; and, being satisfied by a vote that two new Members were required, explained his political views, and afterwards rallied the City, accompanied by an exceedingly large mob, headed by drums and fifes, and banners bearing the motto: "Fyler and light Blue for ever!"

Early on Friday morning placards announced, "Heathcote for ever!" whilst "The Coventry Herald" declared: "We stop the press to announce the gratifying intelligence to the Independent Freemen of this City that R. E. Heathcote, Esq., of Longton Hall, Staffordshire, has been proposed as a second candidate." The revelation of "Gratifying Intelligence" from such a source fell as a bombshell into the Dark Blue camp. The editor was accused of blowing hot and cold, and a wordy correspondence ensued.

Mr. Ellice arrived privately during the evening (the Tory bills declare they will have "No come by night"), and shortly before ten in the morning, Mr. Moore reached the Craven Arms in his carriage. The latter immediately appeared in the recently-erected small balcony, and endeavoured to address the Freemen, who refused to hear him, amidst great noise and clamour, when, much distressed, he seated himself on the window frame. "Fyler and Heathcote!" was the general cry, and no dark Blue party appearing, benches were placed in the street for musicians, and liquor was freely handed about. Amidst an infernal din, Mr. Moore rose from his seat, and again and again made unsuccessful attempts to be heard. Light Blue ward flags were brought close to the Craven Arms, and boards having "Freedom and Independence," and "Lost! A reward of 1,000 guineas for Moore and Ellice's mob," were conspicuous. Gin bottles were hoisted on the ends of poles, and amidst cries of "No Popery!" "No Stock Jobbing!" a large bowl of rice was raised on a staff, in allusion to something Mr. Ellice had said, and a Catholic cross, together with several sheeps heads, were likewise hoisted. Mr. Ellice wisely remained in the room, but Mr. Moore for two or three hours bore the mob's insults with much meekness, and an "epigram" records—

"Three hours has Peter in one posture stood,
With hanging look, in melancholy mood;
He wants to speak, and why, there's no denying,
Standing so long requires a little lying."

Mr. Heathcote was publicly escorted into the City, and having been drawn to the King's Head; he and Mr. Fyler joined interests, and afterwards rallied the Town.

Messrs. Bunney and Phillips, the Sheriffs, attended with their counsel at the nomina-

tion on the 10th of June, and the writs having been read by the Mayor's Crier, the candidates were nominated, when the show of hands was decidedly in favour of Messrs. Fyler and Heathcote, whose speeches were heard by the vast assemblage in front of the booth, but the mob refused to listen to those of the other candidates. Mr. Moore ascended a table in the centre of the booth, but his attempts to be heard were ineffectual, until Mr. Fyler asked a fair hearing for him. He alluded to his 26 years representation of the City, and trusted that the Sheriffs would do their duty and keep order, for he had forwarded to the Secretary of State an accusation, of which something would be heard afterwards ; but on making allusion to personal matters, and the intoxicated state of some of the Freemen, he was met with cries of "Sit down !" Mr. Ellice, wiser than his colleague, did not attempt to speak, but waiting upon the Freemen in different parts of the booth, answered their many questions, declaring he would vote for the Catholic Emancipation. Messrs. Fyler and Heathcote produced their qualifications, and Mr. Moore, still remaining on the table, demanded that the "long oaths" should be administered to the Freemen, and in spite of remonstrance from all sides, four Commissioners were appointed to administer them at the Mayor's Parlour, and four at the Free School. They repaired there about one o'clock, and when they had declared the oaths of allegiance and supremacy, the declaration of fidelity, the oaths of abjuration and the affirmation, and declaration of the effect thereof, the Freemen were granted certificates, which they took with them to the poll. The result of the first day was—Fyler 173, Heathcote 173, Ellice 5, Moore 4. From this it will be seen that the light Blue party held the booth, whilst the four or five votes recorded for Moore and Ellice were those of infirm persons.

During the day, Fyler and Heathcote repeatedly stated that they were opposed to Catholic Emancipation and the Corn Bill, whilst the late Members gave their approval to the measures. Mr. Moore was told that the Priest at the Roman Catholic Chapel was delaying Mass for him, and wanted to make him a Pope. He replied : "If he does, I'll not absolve you."

The following, upon the great question of the day before the electors, appeared—

"Freemen, arise! maintain Old England's cause,
Your King, Religion, Constitution, Laws!
Ask of each man, who deigns to ask of you
Your suffrage, whether he is staunch and true
To our reform'd religion, which alone
First placed a Brunswick on the British Throne;
Ask him (before you fix on him your choice)
If in the Senate he will raise his voice,
And use his efforts to avert the hour
That gives to Papists legislative power.
Such is your duty—such the honest part
Each Protestant should act who has at heart
His country's weal. My friends, let such be *yours*!
'Gainst *Ned* and *Peter* shut St. Stephen's doors.

By Cranmer's ashes and by Luther's blood,
 By all the host of martyrs, who withstood
 The flames and tortures of the Papal See,
 By all you dearly love and value, be
 True to yourselves, your country, and your God;
 Nor bow submissive to your master's nod,
 Who fain would force you by their *threats* to vote
 For Ellice, Moore—the Faggot and the Pope;
 Such threats defy. *If* Freemen, then *be free*,
 And join the general cry, 'NO POPERY!'" "LATIMER."

The out-voters were not forgotten, and the "Times" says—

"The London Freemen frequently controlled the election by their large numbers. They were 'cooped' in the Metropolis and in the larger provincial towns, and brought to Coventry at the cost of the candidates. They entered the City of Lady Godiva in carriages and four, *each Freeman thinking himself a Coriolanus come to save the State*. Treating was rampant, and the non-resident electors visited their native Town free of expense, and were maintained for days."

The printers were busy, and bills of all sorts were issued to the public. The dark Blues had—

"TO BE SOLD BY PRIVATE CONTRACT,

An estate of small value in the neighbourhood of NEWCASTLE. The possessor *wanting money immediately*, the first application will be treated with. As the ground is very swampy and full of gorse, it abounds with GAME, consisting of JACKALS, FOXES, ETC. At the same time will be sold all the *life interest* of a *Half-pay Lieutenant*, at the best price that can be obtained. APPLY IMMEDIATELY at the BOOTH, or KING'S HEAD."

The Light Blues retaliated as follows—

"TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION (*this day*),

BY JONATHAN CHAMBERS,

ON THE PREMISES AT THE CRAVEN ARMS HOTEL,

AN IRON CAGE (*quite new*). The reason of its being sold is, the owner has no further use for it. It is *very capacious*, having been built for the purpose of keeping TWO LARGE BIRDS in, supposed to be a species of the OWL, as they have never been seen in the daytime."

On Monday morning the polling recommenced at nine o'clock, and continued till five, the light Blue party having possession of the booth. This day the poll stood—Fyler 620, Heathcote 620, Ellice 30, Moore 29. On Tuesday morning, the dark Blues came to the booth in considerable numbers, by which means their poll was advanced somewhat. Protests were sent to the Sheriffs to secure free access for all parties at the booth, and some improvement was effected, although several voters were ill-treated, and had their clothes torn. The third day's poll ended—Fyler 865, Heathcote 865, Ellice 203, Moore 201.

Matters were getting interesting, and the candidates excited. Mr. Fyler, in the course of a speech, spoke of the "audacity" of his opponents in telling the Sheriffs they were acting partially, and alluding to Mr. Moore's invective that he and his colleague were *two fiddlers*, said however that might be, they had determined to *drum that gentleman out of the Town* before they parted. Mr. Ellice, from the Craven

Arms, made a temperate speech, although coloured by party resentment. Mr. Moore commenced in his usual style, and said: "Here I am again. I consider that it is absolutely necessary that you should not only hear me, but see me, as an insidious report has currently gone abroad that I have received 2,000 guineas, deceived my friends, and 'flown the pigeon.' My answer to this is, if it be true I will suffer myself to be shot like a mad dog." Whilst he was addressing his friends, the light Blue mob attempted to pass through the multitude in front of the Craven Arms, which led to the greatest confusion and much injury. Mr. Heathcote, who was in the light Blue rally, was pushed down near the Hotel yard, and only after great efforts his friends managed to rescue him, not before, however, he had received some bodily injury, but at length the light Blues succeeded in passing.

Wednesday's poll closed—Fyler 1,162, Heathcote 1,161, Ellice 377, Moore 369. It was evident that the light Blues were turning the lessons learned from their opponents upon former occasions to account. Mr. Moore had then said: "If you cannot secure the election by other means, take them by storm, lads, take them by storm;" but now that the torrent had overtaken him, he forgot this, and wrote down all his foes enormities in a black book, in order to frighten them as to the future. At this time "The Hearty Good Fellow" was issued. It is set to a popular ditty of the day—

"Here's to Fyler and Heathcote, and all their brave men,
We'll neither send Ellice nor Moore back again;
For Ellice has tried to deprive us of *gin*,
And thought his own cause he was certain to win.

Twankadillo! Twankadillo!

He that polls for Ellice is a very mean fellow.

Here's a health to our King and the Parliament men,
Those that have done good may they go back again;
For to drink our brave toasts we'll have plenty of *gin*,
And Fyler and Heathcote are sure to come in.

Twankadillo! Twankadillo!

He that polls for Fyler is a hearty good fellow.

Were our wages reduced to ten shillings a week,
I'm sure we can't get any bones for to pick;
The butchers and bakers might shut up their shops,
And the tailors might come and sew up our chops.

Twankadillo! Twankadillo!

He that polls for Heathcote is a hearty good fellow.

Here's a health to the pretty girl that we may love best,
Who kindles a flame in her true lover's breast,
Which can never be quenched by water or *gin*;
And we'll neither let Moore nor Ellice come in.

Twankadillo! Twankadillo!

He that loves a pretty girl is a hearty good fellow.

Here's a health to our Mayor, and Aldermen, too,
And Fyler and Heathcote, the friends of sky-blue;
May Fyler and Heathcote oft think of the *gin*,
And look to the Freemen, for 'tis they that must win.

Twankadillo! Twankadillo!

He that's Independent is a hearty good fellow."

On Thursday the dark Blues made a stand at the booth, and, accompanied by a band of music, commenced a parade, but before very long nearly all the instruments were borne off in triumph by the other party. The dark Blues now polled better, and the day's result ended—Heathcote 1,310, Fyler 1,308, Ellice 657, Moore 644. Whilst Mr. Moore was speaking at the Craven Arms, the light Blue mob attacked his party in High Street, when fighting and tearing clothes was carried on for upwards of half an hour; but the light Blues carried the position.

On the 16th, Mr. Ellice, having determined to carry the hustings, met his mob at the Black Horse inn at Spon End, and proceeded to the booth. During the day, the proceedings were enlivened by a sweep ascending the chimney of a house near the hustings with a light Blue flag, and shouting "All's up! all's up!" many times, and, it is said, "the light Blues amused themselves at some of the old games carried on by their opponents at Cobbett's election, playing at fly-back, cards, marbles, &c., near the booth, and running about the streets with besoms and lanterns searching for their opponents voters. They also exhibited dark Blue colours, intermixed with crape."

This, the sixth day's poll, resulted—Heathcote 1,423, Fyler 1,411, Ellice 1,020, Moore 989. On the 17th, being Saturday, Moore and Ellice again paraded the Town in early morning, previous to proceeding to the booth. Mr. Ellice did not spare the Dissenters, many of whom could not approve of his views as to the Catholic claims.

"I asked them (he says) how they bore their chains before their religious restrictions were ameliorated; you all ought to know by this time that I am not a supporter of bigotry and superstition; and labouring as I do under the impression that the Test and Corporation Acts were imposed in time of danger, I now say that they ought *not* to be maintained. But these *liberal* Dissenters say, Let us have the Acts repealed, as regards every denomination except Catholics. I for one do not relish this system of self-interest. I have now before me a small handbill, which I will read—'Wanted to purchase, by two gentlemen, one advanced in years, partners in the same concern, and who are about to retire from public life, a quiet Retreat, removed from the noise and bustle of a great City, which is becoming obnoxious to them. Ninety-one miles from London would not prove a convenient distance. No objection to any County except Warwickshire. Any gentleman knowing of such a retirement, so long and so anxiously sought after, may hear of purchasers by applying to Messrs. P. M. and E. E., *late* of Coventry!!!' This is," continued Mr. Ellice, "a production of the best wit and talent from the opponents camp, but we are *now* in Coventry, and shall so remain until the contest is over. As for a retreat, my feelings assure me that as I have combatted for your interests with fidelity, I have certainly secured one amongst the good people of Coventry."

This day's poll closed—Heathcote 1,506, Fyler 1,490, Ellice 1,120, Moore 1,073.

June 19th, being the eighth day of polling, brought the election to an end. Both parties, rallying, met at the booth at nine o'clock, the light Blues crying "It's all up!" and joining in chorus, oft-repeated, of—

"Come, landlord, fill the flowing bowl
Until it does run over;
For to-day we'll merry be,
Now Ellice is done over."

Occasionally substituting "Peter" for Ellice. The Coventry voters had an extraordinary capacity for gin at election times. "Gin hot" and "gin cold" was the favourite spirit, which inflamed the passions of either mob, and countless gallons of the concoction were at this time consumed. The polling slackened towards mid-day, and the light Blues issued a handbill, as if coming from Moore and Ellice, offering a premium of 100 guineas to any person who would "invent a machine for the purpose of manufacturing Freemen." At the time, a voter named Treen came up to the booth to vote. He had partaken of the light Blue treats, and now suddenly appearing amongst the dark Blues, gave Ellice a plumper, for which he was roughly handled by the light Blue mob, before he was rescued by the constables. Messrs. Ellice and Moore resented this, and left the hustings in a rage, after threatening the Sheriffs with pains and penalties for the occurrence. The books were kept open until two o'clock, but as no Freemen tendered their votes,

MR. RICHARD EDENSOR HEATHCOTE AND MR. THOMAS BILCLIFFE FYLER were declared duly elected. There were about 3,500 Freemen on the register, the final state of the poll being—

| | | | | | | |
|--------------|-----------|---------|--------|-----|-----|------|
| Heathcote | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1535 |
| Fyler | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1522 |
| Ellice | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1242 |
| Moore | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1182 |
| <hr/> | | | | | | |
| Majority for | Heathcote | against | Ellice | .. | ... | 293 |
| .. | Heathcote | .. | Moore | ... | ... | 353 |
| .. | Fyler | .. | Ellice | ... | ... | 280 |
| .. | Fyler | .. | Moore | ... | ... | 340 |

The elected Members were accompanied by the multitude to their inn, and afterwards paraded the streets. Messrs. Ellice and Moore recited the story of the election from the Craven Arms balcony, and the former, threatening petition, said: "Mark what I say; these two candidates shall never be your representatives!" a threat which he afterwards found himself unable to put into force.

The Tories were overjoyed with their victory, and a scene of the greatest excitement occurred at the King's Head and around the booth. "One of the old fifers, Tom Pepper, got on the roof, and for a whole hour played 'With a hey ho, chevy! Harkforward, harkforward, tantivy! Hark, hark, tantivy! This day a stag must die!' without stopping, and had to be taken home nearly dead through exhaustion."



CHAPTER LXVI.

COVENTRY ELECTION PETITION: "CONCURRENT JURISDICTION."

George IV., continued (1826 to 1830).

A gorgeous Chairing—"The member for Hob's Hole"—Order of procession—Dinners—Biographies of Messrs. Fyler and Heathcote—"Historical Sketches of Coventry Election"—"The Freeman's Register"—New Parliament opened—Presentations to Messrs. Moore and Ellice—Troubles of Mr. Moore—His death—Members votes—Holyhead Road Improvement Bill—And the Freeman's rights—Origin of the Seniority Fund—The Coventry Election petition—In Committee—Report—Messrs. Fyler and Heathcote declared duly elected—Special resolutions—Charges—Suggested concurrent Magisterial jurisdiction—A Bill introduced for it—Members opposition—Passes the Commons—Withdrawn in the Lords—Presentation to the Mayor—Election Expenses Act—Prohibits ribbons at elections—Mr. Fyler's actions thereon—Are defeated—Mr. Heathcote's inattention—Catholic Emancipation—Passed—Death of King George IV.



WEDNESDAY, 21st June, was the Chairing day, when Turner, the dark Blue printer, in a handbill entitled "Grand Chairing," quaintly declares, "The ladies are respectfully informed that Mr. Fyler has politely consented on this occasion to salute them by touching his lips instead of his nose." The Members were placed in their chairs at mid-day, and the procession proceeded from Hertford Street, through High Street, Gosford Street, Much Park Street, St. John's Street, Little Park Street, Cross Cheaping, Bishop Street, Well Street, West Orchard, Spon Street, to the King's Head. Each chair had a full back, and was lined with light blue silk and silver edgings; a canopy surmounted either chair, on which was a plume of white feathers, ribbons and flowers. A number of especially strong men, prize-fighters and others, were appointed to guard the chairs. The procession was preceded by an eccentric character, one James Riley, who, clad in light blue, and wearing a turban of the same colour, appeared as "*the member for the borough of the barony of Hob's Hole*," a quiet spot on the banks of the river, just without the site of the ancient Mill Lane gate on the line of the Town walls. He was followed by a multitude of the Members friends; decorated in light blue, and carrying flags and streamers; and the band of the 4th Royal Irish Dragoons playing, "See the conquering hero comes." Between the chairs was the Fellmongers banner, into which Company the Members had been admitted "to make them Citizens," and behind came an immense multitude wearing party cockades, with streamers and music. After the Chairing, Messrs. Fyler and Heathcote addressed the Freeman, and a number of

gentlemen retired to St. Mary's Hall, and did justice to an excellent dinner which Mr. Carter, of the King's Head, placed before them. The defeated candidates retired to Leamington; but on the following day, the friends of Messrs. Moore and Ellice gave them a dinner at the Craven Arms, provided by Mr. Whitlock, the landlord.

Captain Thomas Bilcliffe Fyler was the son of Samuel Fyler, Esq., of Twickenham, a London barrister of considerable repute, who died in 1825. The Captain succeeded to his estate, and had a London residence at 19, Dover Street, Piccadilly, and a country one at Teddington, Middlesex. He was born 12th September, 1788, and educated at Winchester School, gained highest honours, and became the head of it. At sixteen he was sent to Christ Church, Oxford, and took an M.A. degree. His oratory at the time of the election was not of the highest order, but improved as time went on; by his friends he was called "little Fyler," from his small stature. He was married at Durham, in January, 1829, to Miss Dorothy Lucretia Light, a daughter of Colonel W. Light, by whom he had two sons and two daughters. Richard Edensor Heathcote, Esq., was a Staffordshire gentleman, residing at Longton Hall, near which he had a property, and considerable interest in mines. At Oxford he had taken his M.A. degree, and afterwards contested Newcastle, where his views differed from those he expressed at Coventry. After representing the Town, when the Reform Act gave two Members to Stoke-on-Trent, he contested that borough in 1832, but was beaten by a narrow majority of 37. At the ensuing general election in January, 1835, he however secured a seat, but resigned it in February following.

Turner, the printer, now published "*Historical Sketches of the Coventry Election*, in June, 1826," which gave a brief account of the proceedings, Mr. Ellice's speech at the close of the poll, and some remarks upon elections, Sheriffs and Magistrates, written with party bias; it related the incidents as seen from a dark Blue standpoint. Turner also printed "*the Freeman's Register*," in 13 parts, in 1827; the first appearing on 5th March, and the last, September 1st. It served the purpose of its projectors in agitating for the dark Blue party, and finding fault with opponents.

The new Parliament met on the 25th July, and a very large quantity of new Members were returned.

The friends of the defeated candidates now presented them with silver cups, in appreciation of past conduct. Mr. Ellice's was from the Freeman and inhabitants, and Mr. Moore's from the ladies; but scarcely had the latter thanked "the graceful and respected females of Coventry," than on the 10th March he was taken into custody by a Sheriff's officer, at 92, Chancery Lane, on the suit of Sir Thomas Perring and Co., bankers, upon a bond for £5,000, to which he had signed his name as one of the directors of the Cornwall and Devonshire Mining Company. Mr. Moore was now unable to claim the privilege of a Member of Parliament to protect himself, and in a letter to "*The Morning Chronicle*," on 10th March, 1827, he says—

"I was awoke out of my sleep, at the age of 74, was arrested by Sheriffs officers, and imprisoned for the *partnership debts of others*, at the instance of Sir John Perring and Co., bankers to the Cornwall and Devonshire Mining Company, who are co-partners in the concern, and *are debtors to the concern both as co-partners and bankers*, which I am not. And thus, under the responsibility, and for the benefit of about 200 co-partners, here am I impounded for the sum of £4,390, out of a guarantee given by six Directors, under the authority of the whole Board, for £5,000 only, *without having received one shilling of the consideration money*, and not owing twenty pounds in the world in my *private affairs*."

At this time the attention of Parliament was being called to the part taken by Members of Parliament in the Joint Stock mania of 1824-5-6. The five other Directors who were joint sureties to the bond were Lord Palmerston, Mr. Sullivan (Under-Secretary at the War Office), Mr. Barrett, M.P., Mr. Philip Perring, and Mr. Aston. The two former paid their proportions, the third claimed privilege, and the others declared themselves not personally responsible. Mr. Moore refused to pay, and desired the case to be tried in a Court of Law. When matters were at length arranged, he retired to France, but died at Abbeville, 25th May, 1828.

In May, Mr. Fyler voted against the motion of Sir Francis Burdett on the Catholic claims, whilst Mr. Heathcote paired off in the minority on the occasion.

A Bill for the further improvement of the Holyhead Road was at this time before Parliament. It was necessary to take certain parts of Whitley Common and the Lammas land from the Freemen, in the Parishes of St. Michael's and St. John's at Coventry. The Bill enacted that after the price had been agreed upon, the sum fixed should be paid by the Commissioners to *the Churchwardens of the respective Parishes*, to be applied by them for the general and public purposes of the Parish, as the Vestry should determine. No less a person than Sir Edward Coke had declared that

"Freemen's rights and grants by Charter
Are first-born rights in every quarter,"

and such a glaring infringement of the Freemen's privileges had never been known since the giving of pasturage at least 600 years before, and naturally there was considerable stir amongst them about it. The Chamberlains, Messrs. W. Reader and I. White, at once communicated with the Members, when Mr. Fyler saw Sir Henry Parnell, and induced him to have the obnoxious clause removed, and another inserted, to enable the money proceeding from the sale of the Lammas lands, to be placed in the hands of the Chamberlains, and a Committee of the Freemen (appointed by themselves), to be re-invested in the purchase of other lands, and the amount became the first part of the Freemen's Seniority Fund.

The threatened Coventry Election petition was at length presented to the House, and referred to a Committee, when, after considerable evidence, Sir John Wrottesley brought up their report on the 9th March, which declared Messrs. Fyler and Heathcote duly elected, but that the opposition to the return was neither frivolous or vexatious. The Hon. Baronet reported the following special resolutions of the Committee, and moved that the report be considered on 4th May—

"*Resolved*—1. That it appears to this Committee that during the late election for Members to serve in Parliament for the City and County of Coventry, riotous and tumultuous proceedings took place in the City of Coventry, and that grievous outrages and assaults were committed upon the persons of several electors and others during the said election.—2. That it appears to this Committee that the Mayor and Magistrates of the City and County of Coventry were culpably negligent of their duty in taking no effective steps to preserve the peace of the City during the election.—3. That it appears to this Committee that the conduct of James Weare, the Mayor, was more especially improper, and unbecoming the dignity of his office.—4. That it appears to this Committee that outrageous and riotous proceedings have frequently taken place at former elections for Members to serve in Parliament for the City of Coventry.—5. It appearing to this Committee that the Mayor, Recorder, and Aldermen have by Charter an exclusive jurisdiction within the City and County of the City, and the Committee thinking it highly expedient to provide some better security than is likely to be provided by the Corporation of Coventry, to preserve the peace within the said City and County thereof, and to prevent the repetition of the same disgraceful scene.—*Resolved*, That it is the opinion of this Committee that the House be moved for leave to bring in a Bill to give the Magistrates of the County of Warwick concurrent jurisdiction with the Magistrates of the City and County of Coventry."

On 22nd May, Sir J. Wrottesley moved for leave to bring in the Bill in accordance with the wish of the Committee. Messrs. Fyler and Heathcote strenuously opposed, and made speeches of considerable length, defending the Mayor and Magistrates from the imputations cast upon those two or three members of that body who had taken part in the late election. Mr. Heathcote was unable to see what good was going to be done by introducing the Warwickshire Magistrates on the Coventry Bench; Mr. Fyler thought it a party trick to gain political power; he said, "the Corporation of Coventry had existed from nearly Norman times, and possessed a separate jurisdiction as a County from the time of Henry VI., nearly 400 years. It contained nine parishes, and nearly 36,000 inhabitants, 3,000 of whom were Freeholders, but had no vote in the County. This was decided in 1821 by a Committee of the House, inasmuch as they held an equivalent, the right of rating and assessing themselves and choosing their own Magistrates. It was only against three Magistrates that the charge was preferred, and it would not be equity to visit the whole for any predilection of the few." The question was put and carried, and a Bill brought in. Petitions from Coventry, for and against, followed. It passed the Commons, in spite of the Members determined opposition, and reached the Lords, but on the 26th June, handbills announced that the Bill had been withdrawn. A gold cup was now presented by the Fyler and Heathcote party to the Mayor, Mr. Weare, as a token of respect and consolation for the trouble the petition and Bill had caused him.

The Election Expenses Bill of 1827 prohibited the use of ribbons at elections, to the detriment of one of the chief trades of Coventry, and in March, 1828, Mr. Fyler endeavoured to bring in a Bill to abolish that portion which would not allow them. In a lengthy speech, he declared that "it would make a difference at every general election of £100,000 to the operative weavers of Coventry, who were nine-twentieths of the population, and that it meant many of them being thrown on the Parish." Colonel Wood, who seconded, said "he once commanded a regiment in which there were 500 Coventry men, steady and good soldiers; many had gone back to their looms,

and whilst he was proud to serve them, he was sorry that the late Act interfered with their future prosperity." Mr. Spring Rice, who had introduced the obnoxious clause, would not "walk through Coventry" with his friends, for he thought "that the electors of the country should not be taxed £100,000 at each election for the problematic benefit of the Coventry weaver." Mr. Fyler, in reply, alluded to the clause being smuggled in during a thin House, and maintained that it was introduced to save certain Members pockets. The House, however, refused to allow him to bring in his Bill, there being for Mr. Fyler's motion 9, and against it 91; majority against, 82.

Mr. Heathcote paid little attention to his Parliamentary duties in 1829, but when asked by opponents to resign, naturally refused. Considerable controversy arose in Coventry about granting Catholic Emancipation, and several local petitions for and against it were presented to the House. The success of Wellington in carrying the measure was fatal to the Government. King George IV. died 26th June, 1830; the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, the passing of Catholic Emancipation, and the commencement of new commercial legislation, occurred during his reign; preparing the way for the advances and triumphs of the Anti-Corn Law League.





COVENTRY ELECTION A SKETCH

"COVENTRY ELECTION: A SKETCH," MR. EDWARD ELLICE, M.P., AND MR. THOMAS BILCLIFFE FYLER, M.P., BEFORE MUCH PARK STREET TOLL BAR, COVENTRY.

(From an original copy in the possession of Mr. J. J. BARNETT, Coventry.)

CHAPTER LXVII.

A PARTY COMPROMISE.

William IV. (1830).

A dissolution—Mr. Fyler seeks re-election—Mr. Heathcote does not—Mr. Ellice consents to stand—Chiefs resolve on no contest—Freemen disappointed—"Wanted Immediately"—Mr. Ellice's arrival—And canvass—Mr. Fyler's coming—"The Sky-Blue Triumph"—Mr. Attwood asked to stand—Humorous bills—Mr. Ellice and the Retrenchment party—Rumour of Mr. C. Mills's coming—Public entry of Mr. Ellice—Mr. Fyler and Mr. Hume—The Chronicles—Curious handbills—"Receipt"—"In Liberty's Great Cause"—Disappointment finds vent—"A Proclamation"—Invented candidates—Mr. Richard Spooner's arrival—His address from the City Hotel—His rally—Biography—Result of the poll—Mr. Fyler and Mr. Ellice returned—A clever cartoon—The customary five.



DISSOLUTION of Parliament followed on the 24th July, and the new Parliament was summoned to meet on the 14th September, when Mr. Fyler again presented himself, and Mr. Heathcote retired. Mr. Ellice also consented to come forward. There was little desire on the part of the Corporation on the one side, or of the members of the "Blue club" on the other, that there should be opposition, for the events of the last contest were felt; but the Freemen were anxious, as usual, that the election should not go over without a fight, and that candidates should be forthcoming, whilst handbills disclaimed against compromise and coalition, desiring every candidate to fight on his own ground. One appeared addressed

"To the Rich and Foolish.

WANTED IMMEDIATELY,

by two very grave and costive Professional Gentlemen of this City, TWO CANDIDATES for the next Election. *Political sentiments, or moral character, of no consequence.* The advertisers have the most unlimited control over the Electors of this City, and in order to prevent any dispute relative to pecuniary affairs, *Five Hundred Pounds* is the lowest fee that the advertisers can take. Application (if by letter, post paid) to be made to Messrs. Dismal and Son, Closeborough Office, Coventry."

Mr. Ellice arrived in Coventry on the 5th July, and canvassed each morning and afternoon. In delight a dark Blue Freeman cries—

"E'er since the hero of the flood,
There's none so generous or so good,
That ever for this City stood,
As our brave Edward Ellice."

Mr. Fyler came a week later, and "commenced to canvass by torchlight." How he arrived at Coventry is best told in "The Sky-Blue Triumph"—

"When Fyler and his friends to Coventry drew nigh,
 The *light Blues* assembled together;
 The clouds all dispersed and *display'd* the clear sky,
 An omen of *sunshiny* weather;
Light Blue appeared in the *firmament* so high,
Light Blue was seen on the *flagstaff* to fly,
 'Fyler is coming!' the *Freemen* did cry,
Light Blue and Fyler for ever! Fal lal, etc.

When Fyler and his friends in the *chariot* appeared,
 Each heart was as light as a feather,
 They greeted his ear with a *hearty good cheer*,
Light Blue and Fyler together;
Light Blue appeared in the *firmament* so high,
Light Blue was seen on the *flagstaff* to fly,
 'We'll take out the horses!' the *Freemen* did cry,
Light Blue and Fyler for ever! Fal lal, etc.

When Fyler and his friends had entered the *Town*,
 The *Indigoes* were put to the tether;
 Some they looked *black* and some they looked *brown*,
 Dark *Indigoes* they all looked together;
Light Blue appeared in the *firmament* so high,
Light Blue was seen on the *flagstaff* to fly,
 'We'll rally the *Town*!' the *Freemen* did cry,
Light Blue and Fyler for ever! Fal lal, etc.

Success to our *champion*, and long may he live,
 The *Blue Fly* to put to the *tether*;
 May each *Freeman* here his vote *freely* give,
 In spite of *silk masters* or *foul weather*;
 May *light Blue* be seen on the *flagstaff* to fly,
 Defeated and scorned may the *Indigoes* lie,
 And bow down before their *IDOL* and cry.
 'O! Neddy, we are done altogether!' Fal lal, etc."

Mr. Thomas Attwood, the Birmingham Reformer, having signified his willingness to offer himself, a requisition was signed asking him to do so. Mr. Ellice had, however, pledged himself neither to enter into any coalition, or introduce a third candidate, provided the Corporation party did the same, and forthwith his friends issued bills stating they had no connection with Mr. Attwood. In a handbill entitled "Speaking Tommy, shown up by the Great Neddy," wherein is introduced an amusing ventriloquial conversation between Attwood and Ellice, the latter is made to say of the *Freemen*, "Master, *I fear* they are not such *fools* as to return a Member to represent *Birmingham* instead of their *own City*;" the bill alludes to Mr. Ellice's professing to be a Reformer, and yet opposing Cobbett at a former election. Mr. Ellice was a Whig, but embraced liberal views, and, as he says in a letter, "had a dread of extreme agitators, who sought to make a living out of their verbosity."

Rumour said that Mr. Charles Mills would also be brought forward, and supported by at least a portion of Mr. Ellice's friends; whilst on the other side, Alderman W. Venables, late Lord Mayor of London, and Colonel Chatterton were requisitioned to stand.

Mr. Ellice had returned to London, in order to meet the *Freemen* there, and on

Thursday he made a public entry into Coventry. Both he and Mr. Fyler, as usual, addressed their constituents. Mr. Fyler defended his conduct whilst representing the City, and from an attack made upon him in a letter by Mr. Joseph Hume, M.P., upon the question of Free Trade and other matters. Various "Chronicles" appeared, which contained quaint sentences, and considerable wit, but were inferior in merit to those of the preceding century. They were "The Chronicles of the Indigoes," in five chapters; "The Chronicles of the Yellows," in four chapters; "The Chronicles of the Yellow Fly," and others.

Curious handbills, humorous, if depraved, appeared, wherein the chiefs of the parties were named as if animals in the caravans at Coventry Fair. Bills announced—"To be seen alive! alive!" "At the Craven Legs," and elsewhere. "The Great Bear," "The Radical Tygre," "The Calf's-head Tygre," "The two Wanderoes," "The Great Ourang-Outang," "The Red-nosed Ape," "The Wild Boar," "The Brazen Serpent," and a host of other names, which given to men, stuck to them afterwards, to their annoyance. It was a quaint conceit of "S. Knapp, printer, opposite the barracks," to publish at "one halfpenny" the proceedings at the Whig headquarters in the following—

"RECEIPT dedicated to THE COOK at the CRAVEN ARMS.

TAKE a dozen or two *Bankrupt Manufacturers*, skin and gut them well, and let them lie two hours in *Salt and Water*; then scrape and clean *two or three hundred ASSES EARS*, and the same quantity of *MONKEYS TAILS*, and let them be *parboiled*. Take two or three dozen *VIRAGOS*, give them *quantum sufficit* of *GIN*, to make them *forget all modesty and decorum*, and have them in readiness to add to the *other materials*. Take also a proper quantity of *STABLE BOYS* and *HELPERS*, with their *Friends* and acquaintances (but be sure no *Freemen* are among them, or you will spoil the *flavour* of the dish). Be sure to soak them well in *Gin, Ale*, and other *inflaming Liquors*. Put all these materials into a *large stew-pan* for *six hours*, then add A *POOR LITTLE SWEEP* and A *RENEGADOE QUAKER*, with a little *Hell Lane Sauce*, and serve up the dish to the President (*BEELZEBUB*) exactly at *Midnight*. Garnish with *TWO LYING LAWYERS* and some *FALSE SWEARERS*. REMOVE--A *large Ass's Head*, with *Indigo Sauce*."

Several "New Songs" appeared at this election—"The Lads of Sky-Blue," "The Lamentations of a Yellow Fly," and others, which are interesting, if devoid of metre and rhythm; the best being entitled "In Liberty's Great Cause."

Disappointment sat on the brows of many *Freemen*, who usually looked upon a contest in the light of a holiday, to be paid for at the candidates expense. In vain they desired "no coalition between Yellows and Blues" and no "joining of interests." Neither Messrs. Charles Lilly, and Adie Cramp, and the manufacturers on the Blue side, nor the Corporation Aldermen on theirs, desired a fight, hence the following appeared—

"BY THE KING.

A PROCLAMATION.

CHARLES REX.

WHEREAS taking into our Royal consideration the present state of public affairs, and of this our loyal City of Coventry in particular, and being at all times desirous of affording marks of our Royal condescension and regard for our faithful subjects the *Freemen* of this City, and knowing from happy experience the love and affection they bear to our right trusty and well-beloved EDWARD ELLICE, some time Member for this City in Parliament; wherefore duly considering the

Premises, WE do by this our Royal Proclamation strictly charge and command, under pain of our highest displeasure, as well all Mayors, Sheriffs, and others having rule and authority in this City, as also others calling themselves Freemen, to aid and assist in carrying into effect this our Royal will and pleasure, to wit, that being convinced of the entire devotion and subserviency of the aforesaid EDWARD ELLICE to all our commands whatsoever, we do hereby enjoin, that as soon as may be by Law, that the said EDWARD ELLICE be returned one of the Citizens to represent this City in the ensuing Parliament. Furthermore, it having been humbly represented to us, as well by the said EDWARD ELLICE as by divers gentlemen, his friends and subscribers, that very many of the said Freemen, not having a due regard to the virtues of Temperance, Sobriety, and Peace, have at former elections addicted themselves to the inordinate use of GIN and other strong waters, whereby the estates of our said beloved EDWARD, and of the aforesaid gentlemen, have been grievously damaged and injured, WE, by the advice of our Privy Council, held specially for the purpose on Monday evening last, do hereby prohibit and strictly discharge our subjects, the Freemen of this our City, from all such disorders and abuses, as they shall value our Royal displeasure; and that nothing may be wanting to evince our Love for, and Interest in, the welfare of all our loving subjects in this City, we do strictly enjoin all those Persons known by the name of *Independent Freemen* that they presume not to thwart the wishes and desires of their Lawful Masters and Superiors touching the approaching Election; and herein particularly that they be content with such Hire and Wages as their said Masters and Superiors shall, by and with the advice of our said beloved EDWARD, think fit and meet to award and bestow upon them. *Done at our Court at Spon End, this Thirtieth Day of June, 1830.*

GOD SAVE THE KING.

In the absence of our Secretary of State,

A - - E C - - - P,

Groom of the Stool."

The Mayor and Corporation were taunted that, though Mr. Ellice had caused them "to expend" upwards of £2,000 in the necessary defence of their individual persons, and their Charter, upon a late occasion, they had decreed that he should be returned as a representative, and, "what is more," says a bill, "shall be returned free of expense," but as neither Messrs. Attwood, Mills, Venables, or Chatterton would stand; invented candidates appeared, one in the person of "their old friend Cobbler Sammons" (as a colleague for Mr. Fyler), who, writing from "my Castle at Radford," promised not only "to make the *working man dissatisfied with his employer*, but to put away by *hanging or drowning* every half-pay apprentice at present employed." Another local character, under the non-euphonic name of "Bunn Jaggs," "a dealer in bones, mushrooms, and old rags," hailing from "No. 25, Opposition Street, Tail End," offers himself "as a commercial man" to come forward with Mr. Ellice.

The election was not to pass over without a contest, for at the last moment Mr. Richard Spooner, of Messrs. Attwood and Spooner's Bank, Birmingham, addressed some of Mr. Ellice's party, and others, from the City Hotel balcony, at the corner of Broadgate, and Smithford Street, and offered himself as a candidate. He was accompanied by several Birmingham Radicals, and on the evening of the 30th, issued an address, declaring that he did not wish to go to Parliament on the shoulders of any other candidate. In the address he does not declare his views, but admits he came before the Freemen in order that they might have an opportunity of exercising the franchise. He and his friends attempted to rally the Town with a white flag flying, but, demurely adds a voter, "not being willing to supply the needful, in the shape of sinews

of war, buttered ale and gin hot, he found but little support." Mr. Richard Spooner, who had contested Warwickshire beforetime, and was now at Coventry, was as yet an extreme man ; he afterwards turned Conservative, and was taunted with it by individuals at the Birmingham Town Hall ; who, turning their coats inside out, and appearing so dressed ; gave him the name of "*Yellow Dick*." He unsuccessfully contested Birmingham in 1835 (when his partner, Thomas Attwood, was returned at the head of the poll), and again in 1841, but was returned in 1844 as a Conservative. He again lost the election in 1847, but was consoled by being returned for North Warwickshire, which seat he held until his death on the 24th November, 1864. He was then 81, and shortly afterwards the bank of Attwood and Spooner closed its doors, with liabilities amounting to over a million, and the Joint Stock Bank, which took the business, paid 11s. 3d. in the £.

After a rally on the 31st, both parties proceeded to the booth. All three candidates were put in nomination, and the poll began ; but Mr. Spooner, finding he had no support, hastily left the Town ; first, however, having sent in his resignation, and having made an attempt at the booth to address the Freemen, his oratory being drowned by clamour. Mr. Ellice desired to know why the poll was kept open, when it was agreed that Mr. Fyler and himself should poll an equal number of votes, and thus satisfy both parties ; but the Corporation, in order that their candidate might have the majority, allowed Mr. Fyler to poll 29 ahead, whereupon the poll closed, the numbers being—

| | | | | |
|-----------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Mr. T. B. Fyler | ... | ... | ... | 451 |
| Mr. E. Ellice | ... | ... | ... | 422 |
| Mr. R. Spooner | ... | ... | ... | 4 |

when

MESSRS. FYLER AND ELLICE

were declared duly elected, and the same day issued their addresses of thanks for the honour done them.

A cartoon at this election shows Ellice riding on a donkey, with Fyler on his shoulders ; they are before the Much Park Street toll-bar, leaving Coventry for London. The toll man asks, "Who pays ?" Fyler replies, "Neddy pays for me," alluding to a report that Ellice had agreed to pay Fyler's election expenses ; and Ellice says, "I can't BEAR this burden any longer," the word Bear having allusion to Mr. Ellice's nickname in the House. Various bills are protruding from the candidates pockets—those from Mr. Ellice's say : "Salutation £100, Craven Arms £300, Red Horse £50, Rose Inn £100," with other items ; and those protruding from Mr. Fyler's : "Two bottles of soda water, 6d. ; Half Moon, soda water, 3d."

There was no chairing, but the Freemen on each side who desired it had the customary five shillings.

CHAPTER LXVIII.

REFORM AND REFORMERS.

William IV., continued (1830 to 1831).

Earl Grey's Ministry—Mr. Ellice, Secretary of the Treasury, and Whip—Lord Russell's Reform Bill—Both Mr. Ellice and Mr. Fyler support Reform—Government defeat—Coventry petitions—Dissolution—Addresses of Mr. Fyler and Mr. Ellice—Threatened Anti-Reform candidates—Lord Hertford and the Recordership—Opponents doubts of Mr. Fyler's Reform sympathies—The letter of Mr. R. Marriott—Mr. Fyler's delayed reply—His pledge to support the Government Bill—And Freeman's claims—Unheeded by the Elliceites—A third Reform candidate—Mr. H. L. Bulwer—His public entry, and views—Mr. J. Scholefield's deputies—Mr. Bulwer's pledge—Mr. J. Hume's advice—Mr. Ellice and the elections—The Freeman and the franchise—Mr. Ellice and Mr. Fyler at Coventry—The latter and his opponents misrepresentation—Nomination—"Bones! Bones!"—Commencement of polling—Dark Blues and Crimsons in possession—Progress of election—Mr. Ellice's departure—In Scotland—Further course of polling—Scene at the booth—Sheriffs injured—Final state of poll—Return of Messrs. Ellice and Bulwer—Chairing under difficulties—Biography of Mr. H. L. Bulwer.

THE result of the elections culminated in the substitution of Earl Grey's Ministry for that of the Duke of Wellington. Mr. Ellice became Secretary of the Treasury (worth £2,500 per annum), and Whip for his party. On the 1st March, 1831, Lord John Russell introduced the Parliamentary Reform Bill into the Commons. Mr. Ellice had some share in its construction, whilst Mr. Fyler voted for the first and second reading, and with the Ministry against General Gascoigne's amendment, which, being carried, led to a dissolution on the 23rd April. In the meantime the Coventry Freeman petitioned Parliament for the retention of their right to vote, and Mr. Fyler expressed himself particularly adverse to any injustice being done them by the Act.

Mr. Ellice's address quickly followed that of Mr. Fyler, but whilst it alluded to Reform, Mr. Fyler's did not. Recorder Lord Hertford, who is said "never to have condescended to take the oath of office, or to have visited the City since his election," threatened to run two Anti-Reform candidates, but they never appeared, and many persons desired no opposition; but although Mr. Fyler had supported the Bill, a section of the dark Blues complained that he would not pledge himself to vote for the Bill as it stood. Mr. Richard Marriott, a Coventry solicitor, and supporter of Mr. Ellice, wrote him on the 25th, asking for his promise to support the Ministerial measure of Reform. Mr. Fyler had no opportunity of answering on the 26th, being busy

all day in London, so that the morning's post on the 27th brought no reply to Coventry, but his answer was received next day, when he pledged himself in the following : "I have no hesitation in repeating my determination to support the great and vital principle of Reform, as embodied in the Bill of His Majesty's Ministers. At the same time, I shall feel myself called upon by a sense of gratitude, as well as of justice, to urge in Committee on the Bill, the consideration of the claims of the Coventry Freemen." The nomination day was near, and two gentlemen of the dark Blue party were sent to London to see Mr. Ellice, who introduced Mr. Henry Lytton Bulwer (late Member for Wilton) to them as a candidate for Coventry. On the 28th, Mr. James Fyler addressed the Freemen from the King's Head, and explaining his brother's absence, declared him to be a "*rank Reformer*." Public announcements now appeared that "in consequence of the vascillating conduct of Mr. Fyler, his persistent refusal to pledge himself to support the whole of the great measure of Reform," Mr. H. L. Bulwer would offer himself; and soon after that gentleman, with Captain Ellice, made a public entry into the City, when from the Craven Arms, the Captain excused his brother's absence for that day, and Mr. Bulwer explained his inattention on the second reading of the Bill—his constituents at Wilton told him that if he voted, he must vacate his seat, to which he replied, "Away with your rotten boroughs! I will have none of them!" and he now desired to support the Government measure.

Mr. Joshua Scholefield (afterwards elected, with Mr. T. Attwood, for Birmingham, in 1835) was prepared to contest Coventry, and sent two delegates to obtain a pledge from Mr. Bulwer to support the whole measure, which being given, Mr. Scholefield issued a printed address, desiring the Coventry Reformers to reject Mr. Fyler and return Mr. Bulwer, and this lost Mr. Fyler some of his former supporters. Mr. Ellice followed Mr. Joseph Hume during his first three Parliaments, and that gentleman had before-time deprecated Mr. Fyler; at this date a letter of his was published, declaring Mr. Bulwer to be a "*good Reformer*," with liberal opinions on the great questions of civil and religious liberty, and desiring the Freemen to return Ellice and Bulwer. As Whip, Mr. Ellice had the conduct of the elections of 1831, and the disposal of large funds collected from the leading Whigs, wherewith he is said to have purchased several boroughs, held by the Tories, and possibly he had more to do with passing the Bill than any other Member.

Many Freemen, although they agreed with fixing the franchise at a uniform standard, did not wish to see their very ancient right of voting swept away, and considerable alarm was felt upon the matter. When Mr. Ellice reached the City, he was asked "What offence the Freemen had committed that they should be deprived of their votes?" On reply, that they would be reserved to them for life, the further question was put, "What offence had the children of the present Freemen, and those yet unborn, committed that they should be excluded from privileges which persons in their rank of life had

for centuries enjoyed, and exercised with advantages to themselves and their country?" "Will not a Freeman of Coventry," remarks a voter, "be looked upon as an *old finger-post*, that no longer marks the true road to the *House of Commons*, if this Bill is passed?"

Mr. Fyler arrived in Coventry on the 29th, and from the King's Head declared to the Freeman that his actions had been most grossly misrepresented, for the Government Bill had his entire concurrence, as shown by his votes. To bring forward three Reform candidates would be to injure the cause, and as Mr. Bulwer was, as indicated by his speeches and votes, at best but a "*moderate Reformer*," he asked for re-election, desiring "a long pull, a strong pull, and a pull altogether" to secure his own return.

The nomination was on the 29th, and the dark Blues and Crimsons rallied their forces early; and with banners flying, drums beating, and fifes playing "March away," proceeded to the hustings. About ten the candidates appeared there, and were met with groans, hisses, and congratulations. The light Blue mob, amidst cries of "Bones! Bones!" carried a long pole with a shank bone fastened thereto, by way of reproach to Mr. Bulwer, who, according to report, had seconded Mr. Warburton's proposal that the bodies of all such persons as died in Workhouses or Hospitals, if unclaimed by friends, should be given up to the faculty for dissection, a statement denied by the candidate himself. The Sheriffs, Messrs. Williamson and Osmond, having called for nominations, Mr. J. S. Evans nominated, and Mr. H. Atkins seconded, Mr. Fyler; Mr. A. Herbert and Mr. A. Cramp, Mr. Ellice; and Mr. Eyre and Mr. Hands, Mr. Bulwer. The polling was adjourned until two o'clock, when the dark Blues and Crimsons had possession of the booth. At five the numbers stood—Ellice 473, Bulwer 457, Fyler 164. Each candidate, in addressing his supporters at headquarters, exhibited a new banner; whilst Mr. Fyler's crimson flag had a crown and the words, "The King, Fyler, and Reform" upon it; the dark Blues was inscribed with, "For the people 469, for corruption 156. *All's up!*"

On Saturday, the 30th, the candidates and their supporters met at the booth; at five o'clock, the numbers were—Ellice 1,333, Bulwer 1,274, Fyler 831. Mr. Ellice now left Coventry, but returned on the 4th May, after which he proceeded to Scotland, where, addressing many meetings, he did yeoman service for various Reform candidates during the next fortnight.

Mr. Fyler consoled his friends by saying that he had hundreds of votes unpolled, which would alter Monday's issue, but his 250 London voters never came. He had no agent, or Committee, with him, and his brother was his chief assistant. During the day, the dark Blues carried a crape-bedecked figure about to represent Mr. Fyler. A sweep's boy ascended Mr. Loveitt's chimney in Broadgate, and waving Mazarine and Crimson ribbons, cried, "It's all up!" and a person clad in a white sheet, with a blackened face and white hair, appeared at the hustings, and haranguing those within in a voice anything but human, said, "I am come to declare, in the name of his Satanic

Majesty, that unless *this your Parliament* is dissolved in half-an-hour, I will deprive Mr. Fyler of his Borough ;” but the farce had a bad ending, for Mr. Sheriff Osmond, the Assessor, Mr. Guest, and the Under-Sheriff, Mr. Dewes, in endeavouring to clear the approaches to the booth by personal appeals, were set upon by the dark Blue mob, and subjected to brutal violence. The numbers this day were—Ellice 1,622, Bulwer 1,525, Fyler 1,051 ; and on Tuesday—Ellice 1,658, Bulwer 1,560, Fyler 1,100.

The poll finally closed at two o'clock on the 4th, the numbers recorded appearing to be—

| | | | | |
|--------|-----|-----|-----|------|
| Ellice | ... | ... | ... | 1663 |
| Bulwer | ... | ... | ... | 1564 |
| Fyler | ... | ... | ... | 1151 |

Thus, with a substantial majority,

MR. EDWARD ELLICE, AND MR. HENRY LYTTON BULWER,

were elected. The charring, which took place next day in a downpour of rain, accompanied by thunder and lightning, was as bright as circumstances would allow. In it was a person dressed as a Lord Chancellor in robes, carrying a scroll inscribed “Reform.” After Messrs. Ellice and Bulwer had descended from the chairs, they thanked their friends from a window at the Craven Arms, and many persons dined with them in the evening—“Tickets, one guinea each.”

William Henry Lytton Earle Bulwer, Esq., of 38, Hill Street, Berkeley Square, London, was the second son of General William Earle Bulwer, of Heydon Hall, and Elizabeth Lytton, of Wood Dalling, his wife, and was born the 13th February, 1801. He received education at Harrow School and Cambridge University, his chief friend being Alexander (afterwards Chief Justice) Cockburn. To his more illustrious brother, Edward Lytton Bulwer, the author of “Eugene Aram,” and other works, he dedicated in 1802 a book of poems ; and went to the Morea as agent for the Greek Committee in London. He entered the Diplomatic Service, and was sent to Berlin, Vienna, and Brussels. When at Paris, he won £7,000 at one sitting of cards. Mr. Henry Bulwer represented Wilton in 1830 ; and in 1831 his youthful appearance in Coventry caused opponents to nickname him “Beardless Bulwer” and “Ellice’s stripling.” With a wish to satisfy the Radicals, he wore a white hat, and from a slavish desire to please the elder candidate, was called “Ellice’s lap-dog.” He was tall and handsome, fair in complexion, had rather dark hair, with regular features and intelligent countenance ; foppish in dress, though aristocratic in manners. He had a pleasant voice and rapid utterance, but an affected pronunciation sometimes spoilt it. To his brother Edward (the Member for Lincoln), he was ardently attached, and was himself the author of certain works, the best known being “France—Social, Political, and Literary.”

CHAPTER LXIX.

PROGRESS AND TRIUMPH OF REFORM: THE WEAVERS AND THEIR TRADE.

William IV., continued (1831 to 1832).

Coronation rejoicings—Presentation to Mr. Fyler—Meeting of Parliament—Progress of the Reform Bill—Coventry petitions—Mr. Ellice's expectations—Political Unions—Radical literature—The Lords and the Bill—Retirement of Earl Grey—Duke of Wellington called—Earl Grey reinstated—The Bill passed by the Lords—Coventry Freemen retain their ancient right to vote—Admission of the £10 householder—The Royal assent given—Celebration at Coventry—"Order of the Procession"—The weavers—Introduction of steam power—Fire at Beck's factory—Distress—Partial Free Trade—Attitude of the Members—An Enquiry—A cry for Protection.



AT the Coronation of William IV. and his Queen, on the 8th of September, 1831, there were considerable rejoicings in Coventry, and the Corporation, at their own expense, had an ox roasted in Cross Cheaping, and a sheep in each of the Wards, for the people.

Mr. Fyler's party presented the late Member with a gold cup, in order to mark their respect for his services.

When Parliament met in June, 1831, the Reformers had a considerable majority in the Commons. Petitions for and against the Bill were presented from Coventry and the neighbourhood; the latter, considering the measure arbitrary, strongly protested against the action of the Political Unions "in endeavouring to overawe His Majesty's Councils and deliberations in Parliament." The Reform Bill was again carried, this time by 136 votes; but on the 8th October, it was thrown out by the Lords by 199 to 158. In December, a third Reform Bill was carried in the Commons by a majority of 162. Mr. Ellice felt that the end of the Reform agitation was near, and would close with satisfaction to his party; he did not apprehend trouble or delay. "There were signs of division amongst the enemy," he wrote to Mr. W. Hickling, in March, "and of the Bill passing without disturbing the present state of things. If not, other measures will be necessary." The Political Unions redoubled their efforts; the question of Reform was popular, and taken up heartily by the country. At Coventry, the printers for the Reformers, W. Hickling and E. Bromfield, deluged the Town with handbill literature of a curious kind, but none too refined, commencing the crusade with the bitterest invectives against opponents in general, and "Boroughmongers" in particular, which continued until the final passing of the measure. The Act was sent up to the Lords

in 1832, and read by them a second time on the 14th April; but on 7th May, their Lordships, by a majority of 35, postponed the disfranchising clauses of the Bill, and virtually rejected it, whereupon the Ministers resigned, but the Duke of Wellington failed in attempting to form a Tory Government, and on the 15th May, Earl Grey's Ministry returned to office, when the King, finding the people *really* desired the measure, prepared to create new Peers if required. The Lords gave way, and the Act was passed on the 4th June. The main features of the Bill are too well-known to need repeating, but whilst the Freemen of Coventry retained their right to vote, and the City returned two Members as before, the uniform £10 household franchise, which was established in the Boroughs, admitted Burgesses to the privilege of returning the representatives conjointly with the Freemen.

The Royal assent was given to the Reform Bill on the 7th June. The following is the

"ORDER OF PROCESSION

To celebrate the

GRAND TRIUMPH OF REFORM,

At Coventry, on Monday, the 25th June, 1832.

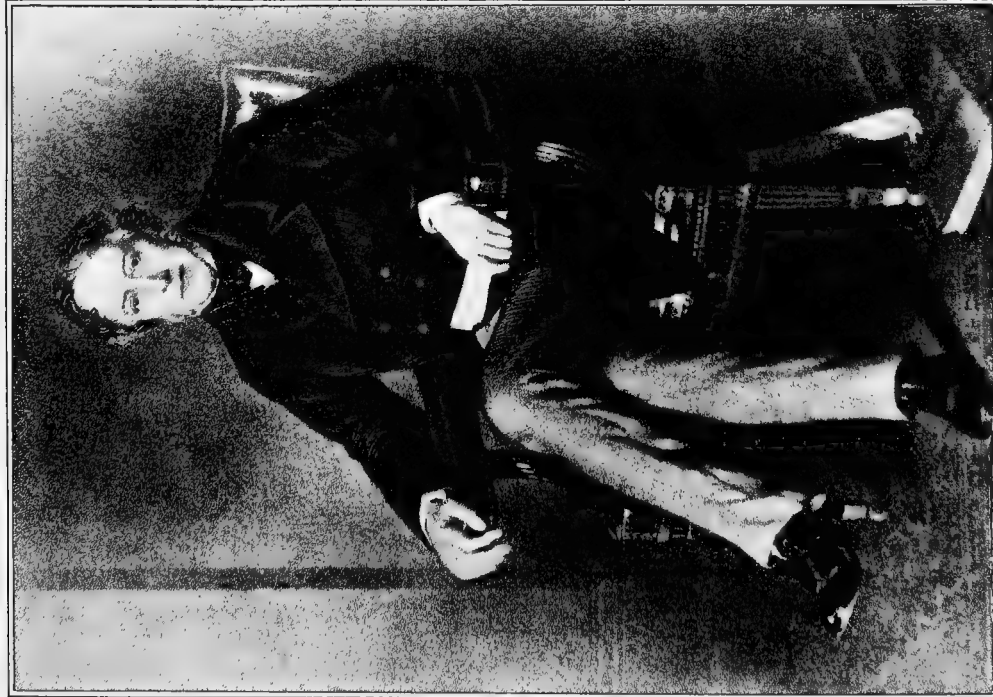
The following is the order of the Procession, which will assemble at *St. Michael's Churchyard* at Eleven o'clock, and start precisely at Twelve, through *Hay Lane, High Street, Smithford Street, Spon Street, The Butts, Hertford Street, Cross Cheaping, Bishop Street, Well Street, West Orchard, Smithford Street, Little Park Street, St. John's Street, Much Park Street, Jordan Well, Gosford Street, Far Gosford Street, returning through Hay Lane to the Churchyard:—*

FOUR HERALDS.—Juvenile Society, with a Banner; Motto, '*May the hopes of the rising generation be realized.*'—GRAND BAND OF MUSIC.—GENERAL COMMITTEE.—CHAMPION OF REFORM in white armour, mounted on a charger, bearing in his hand the Reform Act.—GRAND BANNER, surmounted by the Royal Crown of Great Britain; Motto, '*Our Patriot King and Reform.*'—COVENTRY POLITICAL UNION. Two Marshals. COUNCIL OF THE UNION, with Banner. First Division of Union, with Banner; Second Division ditto, ditto.—GRAND BAND OF MUSIC.—Third Division ditto, ditto; Fourth Division ditto, ditto; Fifth Division ditto, ditto; Sixth Division ditto, ditto; Seventh Division ditto, ditto; Eighth, Payne's Lane ditto, ditto; Ninth, Hibernian Society, ditto; Tenth, Plumbers and Painters, ditto. Two Marshalmen.—GRAND BAND OF MUSIC.—COMPANIES: Goldsmiths, with Banner. Tailors Company and Society, ditto. Butchers, and Streamer. Carpenters, ditto. Bakers, ditto.—GRAND BAND OF MUSIC.—BRITANNIA, with spear and shield, trampling Corruption under her feet, seated in a triumphant car drawn by four horses.—Inhabitants and Societies.—GOSFORD STREET WARD. Griffin Society, with Streamer. Chase ditto, ditto. Queen's Head Harmonic Society, with Flag.—JORDAN WELL WARD. Inhabitants and Societies. White Bear Society, No. 1, with Banner. White Bear Society, No. 2, with Banner. Ben Johnson ditto, ditto. Mattock and Spade ditto, with new ditto.—Inhabitants of Bayley Lane Ward.—GRAND BAND OF MUSIC.—MUCH PARK STREET WARD. Inhabitants and Societies. Brogdonian Birthday Society, with Union Jack and Colours. Green Dragon Old Society, No. 1, with Emblems. Green Dragon Old Society, No. 2, with Emblems. Green Dragon Old Society, No. 3, with Emblems. White Hart Society, with Banner. Woolpack Society, with Flag.—EARL STREET WARD. Inhabitants and Societies. Roe Buck, with new Streamer. Roe Buck, with Crimson Banner. Sword and Mace, with Banner. Bird-in-Hand Society. Chequers Society. Golden Horse Society, with Banner. Cross Keys Society, with Banner.—GRAND BAND OF MUSIC.—BROADGATE WARD. Inhabitants and Societies. Hare and Squirrel Society, with Banner.—SMITHFORD STREET WARD. Inhabitants and Societies. Vicar Lane Society, with Banner.—SPON STREET WARD. Inhabitants and Societies. Inhabitants of St. John's Square, Fleet Street, with Crimson Banner. Rising Sun Society, with Banner. Union Society. Woolpack Society, with Streamer. White Swan ditto. Recruiting Sergeant ditto. Shakespeare ditto, with Streamer. Lamb and Flag ditto, No. 1, with Banner. Lamb and Flag ditto, No. 2. William IV. ditto.—GRAND BAND OF MUSIC.—CROSS CHEAPING WARD. Inhabitants and Societies. Anchor Tavern Society, No. 1.

Anchor Tavern Society, No. 2. Anchor Tavern Society, No. 3, with Streamer. West Orchard Union Society, and Banner.—BISHOP STREET WARD. Inhabitants and Societies. Wheel Tavern Society, with Crimson Flag. Full Moon ditto, with Banner. Cranes ditto. Stag ditto. Holly Bush Old ditto, with Banner. Fox ditto. Unicorn ditto.—GRAND BAND OF MUSIC. COUNTRY SOCIETIES. Bear and Bacchus Society, with Banner. Navigation Inn ditto, No. 1, with Streamer. Navigation Inn ditto, No. 2, with Streamer. Navigation Inn ditto, No. 3, with Streamer.—GRAND BAND OF MUSIC.—COUNTRY UNIONS.—GRAND BAND OF MUSIC.—Marshalmen will be appointed to conduct the Procession, and it is particularly requested that those persons who walk in Procession will form themselves in ranks of six each, and that the colours worn be *Red, White, and Blue.*"

The life of a Coventry weaver was a hard one, for his trade was subject to change and fashion. In November, 1831, agitated on a question of wages, numbers of persons riotously entered the new steam factory in New Buildings, Coventry, belonging to Mr. Josiah Beck, destroyed the machinery, and set the place on fire. Thomas Burbury and Benjamin Sparks were apprehended, and at the March (1832) Assizes, Mr. Justice Park condemned them to death. The intercession of Lord Melbourne, Secretary of State, was asked, and, chiefly by Mr. Ellice's efforts, a reprieve was granted; but no further attempt was made to introduce improvement in the trade until 1836, when a company built a larger steam factory.

During the five years preceding 1832 the distress had increased; neither manufacturer or operative had learnt self-reliance during the times of Protection, and as yet did not look to the betterment of design and production, which, coupled with energy and improvement, would, if sufficient capital were embarked, vastly help to overcome a multitude of difficulties. Partial Free Trade opened British ports, and the French were gaining a foothold in the markets of this country, which were glutted with their goods. Coventry manufacturers and weavers suffered from this foreign competition. When an agitation for an enquiry into the ribbon trade was set on foot in 1832, Mr. Ellice saw clearly that any attempt to return to Protection was useless if made in Parliament, and refused to have an hand in the attempt; whilst Mr. Bulwer desired its postponement until a future time. When the Select Committee on the Silk Trade met in February, the evidence went to show that plain ribbons had been but little affected, and that foreign competition would stimulate native industry. Mr. Bulwer absented himself from it at a critical time. The Tories raised a cry for Protection, and the thorough prohibition of French ribbons into this country, and when on 7th August; a petition from the London silk manufacturers, complaining of the Select Committee's decision, was presented; Mr. Bulwer spoke strongly in the interests of his constituents. This cry, once launched, coupled with that of Reciprocity, served, both before and after the French Treaty of 1860, for the Conservatives to use against their opponents, and its repeated reappearance was often in evidence for many years. In 1836 a larger steam factory was built by a company, and others succeeded. In 1843 a School of Designs was established, and a grant of £300 obtained by Messrs. Ellice and Williams from Government for the purpose.



I am also
Dear Sir,
Yours faithfully
Edw. Ellice

THE RT. HON. EDWARD ELLICE,
M.P. for Coventry, 1818.



I am my dear Sir,
Yours very sincerely
H. Lytton Bulwer.

HENRY LYTTON BULWER, Esq.,
M.P. for Coventry, 1831.

CHAPTER LXX.

A MEMORABLE TENTH OF DECEMBER.

William IV., continued (1832 to 1833).

The term "Conservative"—Preparing for a contest—Mr. Fyler's new colleague, Mr. Morgan Thomas—His biography and first address—Death of Lady Ellice—Revision Courts—Political Unions and Recordership—Earl Craven chosen to the office—Whig Sheriffs chosen—The High Constable and the police—Handbill literature—Public entries of candidates—"Little Fyler and Young Morgan Rattler"—"Ellice's lap-dog"—"True Blue, light Blue!"—Parliament dissolved—Magisterial inactivity—Public entry of Ellice and Bulwer—"Fling up the banner high"—The nomination in favour of the Whigs—Rough treatment of Fyler and Thomas—A Sunday's diversion—Light Blue "navigators," prize-fighters, and roughs—The two Packhorses—The memorable "bloody tenth"—An early rally of the light Blue mob—"Gin hot," and how to make it—In possession of the booth—Dark Blues assemble—Rally—The fight for the hustings—Bob Randle and his fighting men—"Rip them up"—Flight of the "navigators"—Appearance of the booth—The streets—And King's Head—Verses issued on the event—Retirement of Messrs. Fyler and Thomas—Messrs. Ellice and Bulwer declared elected—The chairing—A petition presented—Its complaints—Referred to a Committee—Report—A petition complaining of the Sheriffs conduct—Presented by the Member for Dover—His speech thereon, and rough Ministerial treatment—His motions and their rejections.

HORD ELDON'S term "Conservative" was now generally applied to the advanced part of the Tory party. Between August and December preparations were being made for a contest. Messrs. Ellice and Bulwer announced their willingness to again come forward, and, whilst the Radicals communicated with Mr. T. Attwood, who counselled conciliation with Mr. Ellice, Mr. Fyler, advocating a return to Protection, found a colleague in a wealthy Welshman. The Whigs were afraid Mr. Ellice would go elsewhere, and their adversaries bills say—

"Look down upon us, *dearest Ned*,
For troubles come upon us;
A candidate's announced himself,
Whose name is *Morgan Thomas*."

Mr. Morgan Thomas was born on the 6th August, 1803. He was the second son of Mr. Rees Goring Thomas, of Llanon, Carmarthenshire, by Sarah, daughter of Mr. R. Hovell, a well-known Cambridgeshire Liberal, and in September, 1835, married Louisa Frances, daughter of Mr. J. Apsley Dalrymple, of Gatehouse, Mayfield, Sussex, and took the degree of M.A. in 1827. He was brought up to the profession of the

Law. It was in November, 1856, that he assumed the family name of Treherne, after which he became a Magistrate of Sussex and a Deputy-Lieutenant of Surrey. He possessed considerable property in Wales, had been presented at many of the foreign Courts; and a Freeman who curiously tells his fellows, and the Electors of Coventry, that "for references of character I beg leave to refer you to Messrs. Esdaile and Co., Bankers, in London;" declares Mr. Thomas to be "as independent in mind as he is in fortune." Indeed, when brought forward by his uncle in the Liberal interest at Cambridge, he was not accepted through having some Conservative tendencies. His first address to the Coventry Freeman and Electors appeared 21st July, 1832, wherein he readily accepted a requisition to stand, and declares his principles thus—

"I shall strenuously support the most rigid Economy and Retrenchment, the Reformation of every Abuse in Church and State, and all such Measures as may tend to promote the Happiness and alleviate the Burdens of the People. I shall advocate the early Extinction of Negro Slavery, the very name of which is repulsive to the best feelings of human nature. I shall oppose a Renewal of the East India Charter, because I disapprove of all Monopolies; and I shall perseveringly use every endeavour to ensure the Abolition of unnecessary Places, and of all *unmerited* Pensions and Sinécures. It is absurd to suppose that, with the heavy Taxes and numerous Burdens which press so strongly upon the Country, we should be able to compete with other Nations less embarrassed than ourselves. I am therefore opposed to that ruinous system speciously called '*Free Trade*,' which is deficient in its most essential feature (*Reciprocity*); and an alteration in the present Corn Laws, I firmly believe, is necessary, not only to the well-being, but *even to the existence* of the Manufacturing Interest," and he finally promises to watch over local interests and to support every measure promoting the welfare of Coventry.

The death of Lady Hannah Ellice on the 29th July was a great blow to the senior Member, and in August he resigned the Secretaryship of the Treasury.

The Revising Barristers took their seats at the County Hall, Coventry, in November—one to correct the Freeman's list, and the other to prepare that of the £10 householders. The business was disturbed by the Anti-Reformers, and there was considerable contention. The number of Freeman enrolled was 2,756, and of £10 householders, 529.

The Political Union protested against Lord Hertford's reappointment as Recorder, and when Mr. R. K. Rotherham was elected Mayor in November, William, Earl Craven, received the former appointment. His election, and that of Liberal Sheriffs, appears to show that a change of opinion was coming over the Municipal body. The important office of High Constable was now given to Mr. Thomas Prosser, who succeeded Mr. Barton. He was a Scotland Yard detective, and had the recommendation of Lord Melbourne. About two years after, the old system of night watchmen and day

constables—"the Charlies"—was changed, on the formation of a Police Force under an Act of 1834, for "the Bobbies or Peelers." Their walks extended over the City and County of Coventry, and no Warwickshire Constabulary existed until years after.

Many curious and amusing bills were published by Hickling, Knapp, Bromfield, and other Coventry printers. The public entries of the various candidates into the City at different dates caused gatherings together of their partizans. Mr. Fyler and Mr. Bulwer soon came, but Mr. Ellice was out of the country, and Mr. Morgan Thomas delayed through the melancholy deaths of his sister and her husband. He was met on 4th December by the friends of Mr. Fyler and himself, on the Leicester Road, and a song for the occasion, entitled "Morgan Rattler," tells that

"Morgan Thomas and Fyler are two honest men,
They are not like Ellice and that East India grappler;
I hope Ellice and Bulwer may ne'er sit again,
But let's return Fyler and Young Morgan Rattler.
They are men of good spirit, they are full of good merit,
They'll vote for cheap bread for your wife and prattler;
When they come again they'll face us like men,
And say, 'Here's little Fyler and Young Morgan Rattler.'"

The Tories issued a curious bill after Mr. Bulwer's entry into Coventry, in which they called him "*Ellice's Lap-dog*, commonly called *Bul-wer*," from his close attendance on the senior Member, whom, it curiously states, the mob, "having met, accompanied in a vehicle through some of the streets; after which this false little dog mounted his kennel at the Craven Arms, and there began to bow-wow and bark against Fyler and Thomas." There were several interesting songs, the best undoubtedly being

"TRUE BLUE, LIGHT BLUE.

There are fifty fine colours that flutter and flare,
All pleasant and gay to see,
But of all the fine colours that dance in the air,
Light Blue is the colour for me.
Light Blue is the colour of good true love,
For it melts in your lady's eye;
Light Blue is the colour of Heaven above,
For it beams in the azure sky.

Light Blue is the vest that Nature free
Has spread round this joyous earth;
Light Blue was the hue of the dancing sea
When it gave to Beauty birth.
Light Blue floats through the soft, *blue* vein
Of a bosom that's fair and true,
As the floweret, softened by Heaven's own rain,
Is tinged by the heavenly hue.

Light Blue is seen in the distant vale,
Where the fond hearts love to roam,
It curls in the smoke through the sheltered dale,
As it guides the wanderer home.
And when skies grow dark and the wild winds yell,
If there is but a streak of *blue*,
The brave-hearted mariner knows 'all's well,'
That his *guardian angel's* true.

Then cherish *Light Blue* in your heart so gay,
 Nothing dark shall e'er stain its hue ;
 Let *Fyler* and *Thomas* be decked in its ray,
 And be proud you wear *their blue*.
 Then let all the fine colours go flutter and flare,
 All pleasant and gay to see ;
Light Blue is the colour alone to wear,
Light Blue is the colour for me.

For Chorus, repeat after each verse the four last lines of the last verse."

Parliament dissolved 6th December, and the writs were received next day. It was apparent that the election would be a violent one, yet the Magistrates took small precautions besides swearing in the Army pensioners as specials, and ordering the apprehension of any stranger committing outrage. The nomination was on Saturday, the 8th, and by the desire of the Magistrates, Messrs. Ellice and Bulwer's public entry was delayed until ten o'clock that day, when a very great mob—chiefly Coventry men, with some outsiders—met them on the London Road, and formed an escort to the hustings. It was reported that the Tory mob would stay progress, and "the Rallying Song," in defiance, said—

"Who'll stay our march? Who? Who?
 The tools of slavery cursed;
 Scatter their ranks with glorious old Blue,
 And the fetters we have burst.
 Fling up the banner high, &c."

When Messrs. Fyler and Thomas, who then had no regular mob, proceeded from the King's Head to the booth, but a short distance, they were violently assaulted and beaten, and their friends injured; they were prevented from going, until the Mayor and Magistrates came to their assistance with some specials. The nomination was unanimously in favour of Ellice and Bulwer.

The sky Blue and Yellow party, finding their mob unable to cope with that of their opponents, at once set about to recruit from the neighbourhood, and on Saturday and Sunday secured a number of noted pugilists from Birmingham, and about six hundred "navigators," or navvies, from the works on the Oxford Canal, near Brinklow. They came to Coventry, were quartered at different Tory inns, and ordered to keep free access to the booth for their party's voters on the Monday. Some of them were told to go to "the Packhorse Inn" in the Market Place, kept by a Tory named Gardner, but by mistake went to "the Packhorse" in Well Street, a Whig house, occupied by Robert Randall, a noted pugilist, who kept them there until the election was over. Thus apprised of opponents tactics, the Whigs quietly made every preparation for the next day.

On the memorable "bloody tenth;" as this Monday is still, after fifty years, locally called; the sky Blue "navigators," as early as two o'clock in the morning, made a parade of the streets, and by four had been joined by the Tory mob, who, before proceeding, were served with that delicious concoction, "gin hot," ready for the fray, and which, according

to an old recipe of a Coventry innkeeper, was made as follows: "To 36 gallons of ale, and 4 gallons of gin, add 2 ozs. of ginger, and three grated nutmegs. Boil the liquid warm in a copper; place in tubs, or buckets; and serve in half-pints; with a large cigar for each voter." This mob, having taken possession of the booth, placed its regiment of hirelings in such a manner as to prevent the approach of any persons to it except of their own side. Meanwhile, the dark Blues were collecting on Greyfriars Green. Few at first, they rallied through Union Street, Little Park Street, Much Park Street, Whitefriars Street, and Gosford Street, and were joined by others of their party. Reaching between two and three thousand strong, and headed by "Bob Randall," his prize-fighters, and roughs, they proceeded to the booth to oust their opponents, when a dreadful scene of lawlessness and riot ensued. Randall knocked down an opponent, and the fighting became general. At a given signal he lifted up his arm, and the dark Blues, who were armed as well as their opponents, fell upon the light Blues in a body. "They were told not to murder them, but to leave them hardly alive," said one of the Whig mob afterwards. "The cry was, 'Rip them up!' by which was meant, seize your victims, rip up their clothes behind, and beat them." In the end "the Skies" retreated, and "the Indigoes" became masters of the booth, the top of which was soon covered with a miscellaneous assortment of their opponents clothes. The "navigators" were chased to the King's Head and other inns; "many, thoroughly stripped, were knocked down like sheep, or escaped into the King's Head for their lives, in a wretchedly maimed condition, and the yard of the Hotel presented the appearance of a great slaughter-house, but the gates were closed and the place secured, whilst doctors were sent for to attend to those injured." The following verses describe the event—

"Coventry Blues, proclaim the news
Unto the whole of the nation,
How the Tory knaves,
With bludgeons and staves,
Have wrought their own damnation.

As the sun was dawning, last Monday morning,
They were placed in battle array,
The Blues fell on them,
Oh, mercy on 'em!
Lord, how they did pepper away!

Then those hireling creatures, the great 'navigators,
Were up to their eyes in blood,
Black eyes, broken heads,
Broken limbs, broken ribs,
Was their fate for touching the wood (the booth).

At the King's Head they were each put to bed,
Where they soon obtained surgical aid,
They vowed and declared
That if they were spared
They'd never make fighting a trade.

But Brummagem Pres'on was taught such a lesson
 As made him feel squeamish and sickly,
 He was scared at the blood,
 At the blows and the mud,
 And his legs were his friends very quickly.
 So the contest was ours in seven short hours,
 And Fyler went sneaking away,
 It was no use his staying,
 And begging and praying,
 For the Blues won the contest—huzza!"

Messrs. Fyler and Thomas retired, and the numbers polled were—

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|------|-------------------------------------|-----|
| Henry Lytton Bulwer, Esq. | 1613 | Thomas Bilcliffe Fyler, Esq. | 371 |
| Edward Ellice, Esq. | 1607 | Morgan Thomas, Esq. | 366 |

A chairing followed, and the Whigs caused a medal to be struck to celebrate the return of

MESSRS. EDWARD ELLICE AND HENRY LYTTON BULWER,

A petition against the sitting Members return was presented in March, 1833. It complained of riots, excited and created with the sanction, and by the partizans, of the Whig candidates, in order to deter voters from supporting Messrs. Fyler and Thomas. The petition questioned Mr. Bulwer's qualification, and stated that no due election had been made, as the proper sense of the Electors was not taken. It asked the House to declare the election void, and unseat Messrs. Ellice and Bulwer, but did not claim the seat for Messrs. Fyler and Thomas; the petitioners desiring such further relief as the House should deem fit. Early in April, the Committee appointed, reported that the sitting Members had been duly elected; that neither the petition, or opposition thereto, were frivolous; that great riots had occurred, with serious outrages and assaults on the persons of electors. They declared one booth was not sufficient for the poll, and that although disturbances were apprehended, no adequate measures were taken by the Magistrates to preserve the peace, or keep the Electors from violence. The Committee declared that the Sheriffs were highly culpable in not taking prompt and efficient measures, and decided to lay the evidence before the House for consideration. But neither the Coventry Members, or the Whig Ministers, desired this; and on the 8th August, Mr. Halcombe presented a petition from 960 Coventry Electors complaining of the Sheriffs conduct, and the gross outrages caused by their neglect. He pointed out "that *Robert Randall*, the great leader of Mr. Ellice's bullies, had, since the election which his fists had promoted, *been raised to a Corporate office in Coventry*; and that *Thomas Hammerton*, another bravo, called from his known brutality and pugilism '*the chicken butcher*,' had *recently been appointed to a place in the Customs in London*." The House greatly disturbed the Hon. Member's speech, desiring to screen Mr. Ellice and the Sheriffs. It was "Boat Race day," and the Ministers, with their friends, finding they could not silence him, left the House to view it, when Mr. Halcombe continued to address the nearly empty benches. He moved "that the Sheriffs do appear at the Bar of the House," which was negatived; and then for a copy of Randall's appointment under the Sheriffs, or Corporation, of Coventry, which was also refused.

CHAPTER LXXI.

COVENTRY REPRESENTED BY A CABINET MINISTER: A QUIET ELECTION,
AND A CLOSELY-CONTESTED GENERAL ONE.

William IV., continued (1833 to 1835).

Mr. Ellice appointed Secretary of War—A new writ moved for Coventry—Opposition of Mr. Morgan Thomas—Mr. W. Cobbett, M.P. recommends his son, Mr. J. M. Cobbett—A quiet election—Five polling booths erected—Nominations of E. Ellice, M. Thomas, and J. M. Cobbett—Conservative organization—Result of poll—Mr. Ellice re-elected—Resignation of Earl Grey—"The Grey list"—Mr. Ellice and Lord Melbourne's first Ministry—Destruction of Houses of Parliament—Dismissal of Ministers—Peel's Cabinet—Dissolution—Radical dissatisfaction with Mr. Ellice—Their candidate, Mr. W. Williams—Retirement of Mr. Bulwer—Separate canvasses of Mr. Thomas and Mr. Williams—Illness of Mr. E. Ellice—Mr. R. Ellice conducts his brother's election—"A Radical trick"—A stoutly-fought contest—Caution to the Corporation—First day's poll—Final result—Biography of Mr. W. Williams—After account of Mr. H. L. Bulwer—Mr. Ellice's address of thanks.

DIFFERENCES of opinion occurred in the Grey Ministry, whereupon the Earl persuaded Mr. Ellice to accept the office of Secretary of War, with a seat in the Cabinet, and he was sworn shortly after a member of the Privy Council. Mr. Ellice, who had taken passage to America, where private affairs required his attention, remained at home; and, as the position was one of profit, an appeal to his constituents became necessary, upon his late co-Secretary of the Treasury, Mr. Spring Rice, moving the House that a new writ be issued for Coventry. After the large majority of the last election, Mr. Ellice desired to be returned without opposition, but Mr. Morgan Thomas, nothing daunted by defeat, came forward to oppose him, trusting this time to have a fair poll. The extreme section of the Whigs made application to Mr. W. Cobbett (now Member for Oldham) to find an opponent; and, in a letter full of charges against Mr. Ellice's votes on the Army and Navy Estimates, and other matters, he recommended his son, Mr. John M. Cobbett, as a candidate, but he (the son) did not come to Coventry.

This election was a quiet one, for the Magistrates made elaborate preparations, and one thousand special constables were sworn in to preserve the peace. Five booths were erected—one in Broadgate, a second in Spon Street, a third in Hertford Street, a fourth in Smithford Street, and a fifth in Bishop Street; each had two compartments to effectually carry out the polling. At the nomination, Messrs. J. Beck and G. Badley

proposed and seconded, Mr. Ellice; Captain Bunney and Mr. Newsome, Mr. Thomas; and Messrs. D. Buckney and C. Hulm, Mr. Cobbett. As the show of hands was in favour of Mr. Ellice, a poll was demanded on behalf of both the latter gentlemen. The Conservatives were badly organized, and Mr. Cobbett stood no chance. The voting commenced on the 12th April, and ended next day, when the numbers were—

| | | | |
|---------------------------|-----|-----|------|
| Edward Ellice, Esq. ... | ... | ... | 1502 |
| Morgan Thomas, Esq. ... | ... | ... | 1208 |
| John M. Cobbett, Esq. ... | ... | ... | 89 |

Thus, with the greatly reduced majority of 294,

MR. EDWARD ELLICE

was again chosen for Coventry.

Earl Grey resigned in July, 1834, and Lord Melbourne became Premier. Great as had been the cry of the Whigs against patronage and placemen, their chief did not practise such teaching, if "the Grey list," published by S. Knapp, a Coventry printer, is to be believed, which states that his Lordship and nineteen members of his family were receiving no less a sum than £171,890, per annum, for services from the country. Mr. Ellice, whose place is stated as worth £3,500, continued in Lord Melbourne's Ministry until its termination in December, 1834; he was the most liberal member of it, and none more fearlessly asserted their opinions. After the Reform Bill, he was opposed to further changes, and in a measure disagreed with Lord Russell's proposals for further reform.

On the 16th October, 1834, the Houses of Parliament were consumed by fire. On the dismissal of Lord Melbourne, the King called upon Wellington and Peel to form a Conservative Ministry, and Parliament was dissolved 29th December. The Coventry Radicals made no secret of their enmity to Mr. Ellice, and avowed their first object to be his defeat. They induced Mr. William Williams to become a candidate, and his address appeared. Mr. Bulwer and Mr. Ellice both announced their candidature, but the former, fully acquainted with the Radical designs against his colleague; who was in Italy in delicate health, and unable to attend the election; generously resigned to save him his seat, and accepted an invite to contest Marylebone instead.

In the meantime, Mr. Thomas again came forward in the Conservative interest, and he and Mr. Williams commenced their separate canvasses, as did Mr. Russell Ellice on behalf of his brother. "The Radicals," says a voter, "in order to prove their antipathy to Mr. Ellice, canvassed the Conservative Electors upon the principle that if they would vote 'Thomas and Williams,' they (the Rads.) would go 'Williams and Thomas.'" This very conscientious trick succeeded so far as to induce six hundred Conservatives to give a vote to Mr. Williams, whose party, instead of giving the *quid*

pro quo promised, plumped their man, and placed him head of the poll. This was caused by private letters from Messrs. T. Attwood, W. G. Lewis, and other prominent leaders, suggesting conciliation, the dropping of differences, and voting for "Williams and Ellice." The election took place on the 7th and 8th January, 1835, the Sheriffs being Thomas Cope and Joseph Howe, Esquires. It was fought strenuously, and every available voter was brought to poll. The following handbill appeared—

"FREEDOM OF ELECTION. THE CORPORATION are cautioned against attempting undue influence at the present Election, and the Servants of the Public—THE POLICEMEN—are recommended not to collar Freemen, or take them to the Watch-house, nor beat them with their staves, for shouting

NO ELLICE AND WILLIAMS!"

The first day's (Wednesday) poll closed—

| | | | | |
|------------|-----|-----|-----|------|
| Williams | ... | ... | ... | 1270 |
| Thomas | ... | ... | ... | 1172 |
| Ellice ... | ... | ... | ... | 1020 |

Whilst the final result on Thursday was—

| | | | | |
|------------|-----|-----|-----|------|
| Williams | ... | ... | ... | 1865 |
| Ellice ... | ... | ... | ... | 1601 |
| Thomas | ... | ... | ... | 1566 |

Thus, with a poll of 3,170 votes, out of a possible 3,577, Mr. Ellice was only returned by a narrow majority of 35.

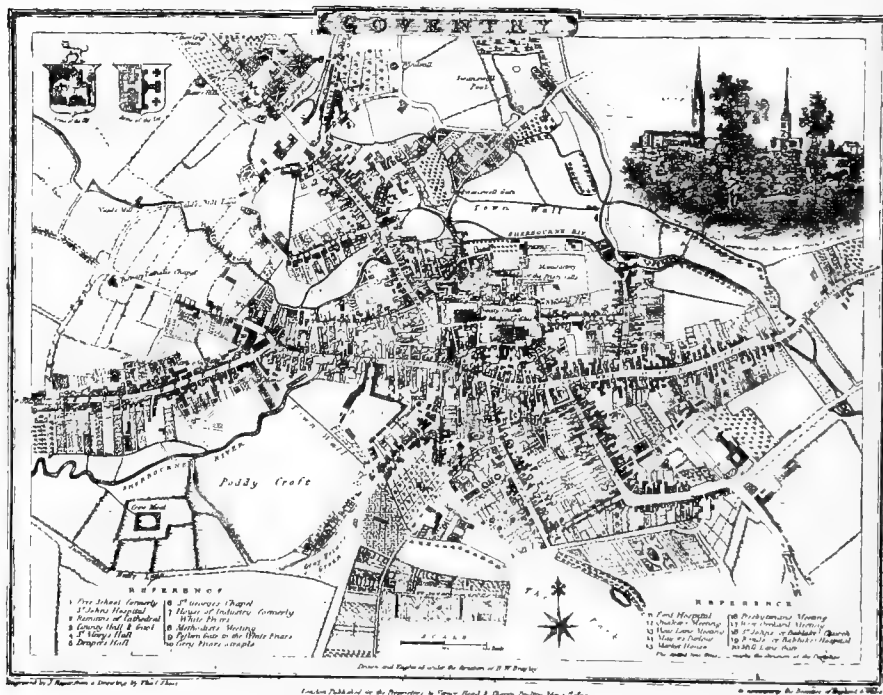
MR. WILLIAM WILLIAMS AND MR. EDWARD ELLICE

were thereupon declared elected.

Mr. W. Williams was a retired London merchant, and had been a member of the Court of Common Council. He called himself a Radical Reformer, and took every opportunity of denouncing "the inquisitorial Income Tax," and of criticising the obnoxious part of the Estimates. Two articles of his political creed were the free importation of corn and the protection of native industry. "He is," says a writer, "a stout square man, about 46 years of age, and apparently not to be overdone by a little labour. If he sets about reforming the public expenditure, as he promises, he will need all his strength, for the task is Herculean;" and several years after, another adds: "The Member for Coventry supersedes Mr. Hume as Objector-General to all the Estimates, and, when that gentleman was out of the House, took his department as a curtailer of needless expenditure, and now assists the Member for Montrose with great zeal and assiduity. By cavilling at the votes, he leads the Secretary of the Treasury, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, weary lives on an Estimate night; but although not a frequent speaker, he takes a fair share in debate; and a Member more attentive to the less public duties of his position could not be found."

Mr. H. L. Bulwer was chosen for Marylebone on 9th January, being second on the poll with 2,781 votes, beating the next candidate by 919 votes, and sat during the Parliament, but in November following his election, became Secretary of the Legation, and *Chargé d'Affaires* at Brussels. He successively became Secretary to the Embassies at Constantinople, St. Petersburg, and Paris. In 1843, he was appointed Ambassador to Spain; and in May, 1848; on a diplomatic rupture, being requested by the Spanish Ministry to leave Madrid; his early arrival in London led to the prompt dismissal of the Spanish Ambassador. He was then made a K.C.B., and married Charlotte, daughter of Lord Cowley. In April, 1849, he received the appointment of Ambassador at Washington; in 1852, Minister Plenipotentiary at Florence; and after filling other offices, was appointed Ambassador Extraordinary to the Porte at Constantinople, but retired from diplomatic service in 1865. Having been returned for Tamworth in 1868, he retained that seat until 21st March, 1871, when he was created Baron Dalling and Bulwer. His death occurred somewhat suddenly on 23rd May, 1872.

Mr. Ellice wrote on the 24th of January an address to his constituents from Naples, thanking them for his election, and alluding to the measures of national interest. It is an interesting document, and as published, formed sixteen pages of closely-printed matter.



PLAN OF COVENTRY, 1807. FROM A DRAWING BY THOMAS SHARP.



COMMEMORATION MEDAL.

Struck to celebrate the Return of Messrs. ELLICE and BULWER for Coventry, in 1832.



"LAMMAS RIDING AT COVENTRY."

From a Painting by E. RUDGE (Drawing Master at Rugby School), in the possession of the Author.



COMMEMORATION MEDAL.

Struck to celebrate the Return of the first Reformed Corporation at Coventry, in 1835.

CHAPTER LXXII.

THE MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS REFORM ACT.

William IV., continued (1835 to 1837).

Resignation of Peel's Ministry—Recall of Lord Melbourne—Mr. Ellice not chosen in the Government—A loyal petition—Municipal Reform Bill—Local Inquiry—Provisions of the Act—The case of the Freemen—Party meetings at Coventry—The Freemen on the defensive—Petition—The Bill in the Lords—Coventry Corporation petition—Their case heard—Lord Lyndhurst's opposition—His valuable aid to the Freemen—Obnoxious clause thrown out—Bill passed—Choosing the new Corporation—Commemorative medal struck—How Coventry was affected—Resignation of Recorder, Earl Craven—Mr. George Long, Barrister, appointed—New boundary—Sale of Municipal trappings—A humorous handbill—Weavers distress and strike—Sympathy from the Queen—The King's death.



N the 19th February, 1835, when Parliament assembled, Sir Robert Peel, although the elections had gone in his favour, was not in a majority, and resigned in March ; when the King recalled Lord Melbourne, in whose reconstructed Cabinet Mr. Ellice did not appear. The Tories of Coventry sent an address to the King, expressive of their loyalty to the House of Brunswick, and appreciative of the conduct of his late Minister.

The new Government confined their measures chiefly to Municipal Reform, and the Irish Church, and on 5th June, Lord John Russell introduced his Municipal Corporations Reform Bill in the Commons. It was a measure which affected Coventry considerably. In 1833, Inquiries were held into the state of the Coventry Corporation, and in October that year, A. E. Cockburn and R. Whitcombe, Esquires ; the Commissioners for the Midland district ; heard evidence at Coventry, but the latter gentleman died before the Report was published in 1835.

The measure was the sequel to the Reform Bill of 1832. The Commission revealed anomalies of Municipal government on all hands, and, "to prevent these in future, it was proposed that the charters of the boroughs should be taken away, and that there should be one uniform system of government, to be styled Mayor, Aldermen, and Burgesses, and one uniform franchise for the purpose of election ; except in some of the larger places, where it was desirable to have a Recorder or other Magistrate ; and the qualification of Electors was settled to be persons who for three years had been rated to the poor, and had paid their rates. The right of acquiring the freedom of a Corporation by birth or apprenticeship was to be abolished." It was asked in

the House of Commons: "What did the Reformers mean by first bringing in a Bill which was based upon perpetuating the rights of the freemen of England, and recognizing them as a part of the Constitution, and then within three years bringing in another intending to deprive them of their rights? Was not this a precedent for breaking up the final settlement?" The clause for disestablishing the freemen was carried only by a narrow majority of 28.

The Whig Bill proposed to disfranchise the freemen of England, and naturally led to dissatisfaction against that party at Coventry. Meetings held at the Craven Arms, and elsewhere, to discuss the Bill and forward petitions in its favour, were badly received, and much confusion ensued. It was thought that as the Freemen decreased in numbers, and the race became extinct, their property would pass to the Town, in aid of local rates; and, by confiscation of the possessions of the defenceless poor man, aid the rich one "at his expense." At a meeting of Freemen held to discuss the situation, Messrs. Steane and W. Taunton spoke stoutly against the Bill's proposals, the latter declaring he could not trust his own party, the Whigs, in the matter. It was pointed out that the Coventry Freemen had as good a claim to their rights and privileges as Lord John Russell himself had to his family estates, and would equally be justified in depriving him thereof as he in trying to dispossess them of their rights. They petitioned the Lords for justice to be done them; against spoliation of theirs—the poor man's estate—held for centuries uninterruptedly; for the retention of their votes, their freedom, and apprenticeship, present and to come.

When the Bill passed the Commons, the Lords desired to hear the Corporations by Counsel, before so drastic a measure was enacted. The Coventry Corporation petitioned Parliament, explaining their grievances against the Bill. They complained that the Inquiry was conducted unfairly, information suppressed and coloured, and that all sorts of gossip had been added. They were heard afterwards at the House.

Lord Lyndhurst, the late Lord Chancellor in Sir Robert Peel's Government, persistently attacked the Bill in the Lords, and his amendment to omit the clause disfranchising the freemen was carried by 93 majority; whilst his further motion to secure for them their Parliamentary franchise was carried without a division. The Commons adopted the measure, and on 9th September, 1835, the Act passed.

No new Charter officers were chosen on 1st November, the members of the old Corporation keeping their places until the new Town Council were elected under the fresh system on 29th December following, the Act coming into force on 1st January, 1836. This new body, under the name of the Mayor, Aldermen, and Burgesses of Coventry, constituted the City Council, and at their first meeting chose Mr. H. C. Adams, of Anstey, as Mayor. On the 7th, Mr. George Eld, the last Mayor under the old system, transferred the Municipal regalia to him, and a medal was struck to commemorate the incoming of the new Corporation. The revenues of the estates, being assigned to

public purposes, went to "the Borough Fund." Three sets of Trustees, named General Charity, Sir Thomas White's Estate, and Church Charity, were formed for the management of the Charities formerly worked by the old Corporation. Amongst various matters required by the Act, the Town Clerk was to prepare, and keep, rolls of the Freeman and Burgesses, an Auditor was appointed to audit the Corporation accounts, and a Watch Committee formed. For the purposes of the Act, new Wards were formed. The North Ward ("seven country parishes of the County of Coventry") being included, led to considerable litigation.

The Earl of Craven resigned the Recordership, and a London barrister, Mr. George Long, was appointed, who, discharging the functions of Judge, presided in the Court of Record at Coventry, at a salary of £100 per annum.

The various assortment of Municipal trappings collected and used by the old Corporation were sold by Messrs. White and Son, auctioneers, at St. Mary's Hall, on July 26th, 1836, and amongst them the two chairs used for chairing Members of Parliament after elections. The particulars of sale advertised in the local papers provoked the following humorous handbill—

"COUNCILLOR FROTH

Has the dishonour to announce to the Public that he has volunteered his officious services to submit for SALE BY PUBLIC AUCTION (*without reserve or shame*), TO-MORROW MORNING AND THE NEXT, at Twelve o'clock each day, *In the large room next door to the upstairs obscure POLISH OFFICE called OLD HARRY'S HOLE, in the WINDY CORNER, Part of the Miscellaneous Property belonging to THE NEW BOROUGHMONGERS, Consisting of a Valuable and Antique Service of Plates and Dishes, Spoons and Nutcracks, Decanter and Wine Glasses, Mustards and Vinegars, which are no use to inhospitable Persons. Ladders and Hasteners, which are useless to those who have climbed to the top of the tree and can go a good pace without assistance. Saucepans and Spouting, which are unnecessary to men who have a large stock of their own. Superior and Capacious Coppers and Furnaces, formerly used in making Soup for the Poor, but which cannot be thus employed by those whose charity is stopped. Large Old Metal Measures, from a bushel to a short one, which Purchasers will be allowed to keep after they have shelled out their fees to Mr. Inspector for reducing them to modern dimensions. Also, the Original Cap and Side Saddle, Whip, and Bridle of*

LADY GODIVA,

Together with the Dresses, Flags, and Accoutrements of the Pages and Attendants, which ever since her time have been used at the commemoration of her *successful exertions for abolishing oppressive Tolls*; but of which it is inexpedient, degrading, and demoralizing to recall any recollections, since the vast and rapid progress which has lately been made in *requirements* has rendered such an exhibition as that of Godiva anything but satisfactory to the *sanctity and majesty of the New and Holy Inquisitors of Market baskets*.—N.B. The Prayer Books, Regal Paintings, and Baubles will be knocked down on the first convenient opportunity.—*Stephen Knapp, Printer, Smithford St., Coventry.*"

The distress endured by the Coventry weavers was exceedingly great, and a lowering of wages led to a strike. Their case was submitted to the Queen, who expressed sympathy and commiseration for them, and sent £50 towards a relief fund, "assuring the weavers of Coventry, through the Mayor (Mr. T. Banbury), that every encouragement, both by example and command, should be exerted to promote the wearing of British ribbons both by the Queen and all within Her Majesty's influence," which Royal command had barely time to be felt, when King William IV. died on 20th June, 1837.

CHAPTER LXXIII.

A FIVE-CORNERED FIGHT: OPENING OF THE LONDON AND BIRMINGHAM RAILWAY.

Victoria (1837 to 1839).

Forming "The Coventry Standard"—New Parliament—Messrs. Ellice and Williams addresses—Mr. Morgan Thomas again comes forward—A second Conservative candidate, Mr. John David Hay Hill—Extracts from "the Chronicles"—The Chartist candidate, Mr. John Bell—His notions—Further extracts from "the Chronicles"—The five candidates in the City—"Whig wheedling"—Upsetting the Chartists—Nomination—Result of poll—Return of Messrs. Ellice and Williams—Presentation to Mr. Thomas—The Queen's Coronation—Mr. Williams and the Indenture Stamp Act—The London and Birmingham Railway—Opened—Reasons for keeping it out of the Town—Lord Hertford's, and Lammas, lands taken—Effect of railway on elections—Birmingham Chartist Riots—Their Coventry meeting—And inflammatory statements—Visit of Queen Adelaide—Loyal reception by the Mayor and Corporation.



ON June, 1836, "The Coventry Mercury" had been disposed of by Mr. C. Rollason to the "Coventry Newspaper Company, for the establishment of a Conservative weekly paper called 'The Coventry Standard, and General Advertiser.' To be published on Friday morning. Capital £1,500, in 3,000 shares of 10s. each." It was hoped that the Stamp Duty would shortly be reduced from 4d. to 1d., and "the tax on knowledge" averted.

On the 17th July, 1837, Parliament was dissolved, and Messrs. Ellice and Williams promptly issued addresses, defending their votes and the support they had given to the Ministry. Mr. Morgan Thomas again came forward; in his address written from Tooting Lodge, on the 5th, he desired diminution of the public expenditure, and, as a Churchman, believed that national religion was beneficial. Free Trade, he inferred, was reducing the City to ruin; his opponents said, "Coventry is not the whole country," but its interests, he declared, should at least be sacred to its representatives. A second Conservative candidate came forward, Mr. John David Hay Hill, of Gressenhall Hall, East Dereham, Norfolk, whose address appeared on the 17th, promising the stoutest opposition to partial Free Trade. This is how the Conservatives and their candidates were humorously, though satirically, described in the "Second Chapter of the Chronicles of the Sayings and Doings of the Skies, *alias* Legs, *alias* Tories, *alias* Hanoverians," and shews to what insults candidates at the time were subjected—

"And they went to the man Morgan, who is commonly called Tommy the Truckler, because he weareth two faces—one for Cambridge, which looketh *blue*, and one for Coventry, which is an *orange yellow*—and lo! he had been thrice rejected of Coventry, and his head was heavy, and his purse light, and he said unto them: 'Lo! you have plucked me until my flesh is sore. Nevertheless, if ye will pay the piper I will dance, and, in lack of a second candidate, you shall have my dog Pompey also, who, though he is an (H)ill-looking cur, is of the true Hanoverian breed, and will fetch and carry for ye, and will play many antics; yea, we will be your puppets, and ye shall pull the wires. I will bully for ye, and Pompey shall bark.' . . . And on the morrow, lo! Tommy arrived per wagon, like a bale of returned goods, and Pompey came after him, and there was a great gathering of the faction at the King's (of Hanover) Head, which is their place of conspiracy. And lo! the slaves of the faction were frantic with joy, as they knew the spiggots must be set running, for them to swig thereat, for, like beasts of field, they think not, neither do they understand; and lo! they ran about like Bedlamites, yelling out, 'No Ellice! No Williams!' which, being interpreted, meaneth No truth, No honesty. . . . And lo! Tommy opened his mouth, and foolishness came thereout; yea, he talked much, but said nothing, and Pompey wagged his tail and played many antics, to the great diversion of all the assembly. And when the performance was over, Tommy bowed, and Pompey bow-wowed, and so ended the fun."

The Chartists started a candidate, a Mr. John Bell, of London, under the recommendation of Mr. Fergus O'Conner. In a speech on Greyfriars Green, declaring the principles of Chartism, he stated his watchwords were "Universal suffrage" and "Protection of native industries." The dark Blues did not relish Mr. Bell's presence, and this is how Hickling, one of their printers, records affairs in the "First Chapter of the Chronicles of the Sayings and Doings of the Skies, Indigoes, Radicals, and New Lights"—

"Now after these things it came to pass that a certain lunatic appeared in the streets of Coventry, crying out, 'Lo! I am the *New Light*. Give ear unto me, for none else can save ye!' And the name of the madman was *Bell-ow*, and he bellowed out with a loud voice: 'Robbery! Robbery! Lo! the capitalist is a robber; the manufacturer is a robber; the shopkeeper is a robber; the man who hath two coats is a robber; yea, the accumulations of industry are all robbery. Half of ye are rogues, and the other half are fools; half of ye *mongers*, and the other half *mongrels*, and I alone have wisdom. Elect me for your councillor, I demand, and give me your money!' Thus he raved until the going down of the sun, and the faction rejoiced exceedingly, saying one to another: 'Lo! this firebrand will sow discord amongst the people; yea, he will divide, and we shall conquer.' Nevertheless, all who had eyes to see and minds to think, heeded not his ravings, and refused to leave the substance for a shadow, or practical reforms for wild theories, baseless as a vision, sounding and empty as a BELL."

The candidates had arrived in Coventry by the Friday before the poll. Mr. Ellice addressed his friends from the Craven Arms, and "the Coventry Standard" ironically remarked, that "the whole was a fair specimen of Whig wheedling and political humbug, and shewed nothing so much as the art of avoiding those points which had a political connection with the local interest of his constituents." Mr. Bell spoke on Greyfriars Green. His presence was neither acceptable to the followers of Mr. Ellice or Mr. Williams, and the crowd, on leaving High Street, pressed through his meeting shouting "Ellice and Williams," and upset the platform there; its occupants escaping with difficulty.

At ten o'clock on Saturday, Mr. Sheriff T. H. Merridew, and the officials, appeared at the hustings, when the proceedings of nomination were gone through in dumb show. Mr. Thomas was proposed by Mr. Cope, seconded by Mr. R. K. Rotherham; Mr. Hill

by Mr. Bunney and Mr. T. S. Morris; Mr. Ellice by Mr. Summers and Mr. Smith; Mr. Williams by Mr. Clark and Mr. Brunskill; Mr. Bell by Mr. Peters and Mr. Bradley. The show of hands was in favour of the Liberal candidates. Afterwards, all the candidates were busy addressing the voters, and Mr. Bell, in speaking on the "Green," said his quarrel was not with Whig or Tory candidate, but he "wished to shew his utter contempt to that sham Radical, Williams."

The polling commenced briskly on Monday. At its close the result was—

| | | | | |
|--------------|-----|-----|-----|------|
| Ellice ... | ... | ... | ... | 1778 |
| Williams ... | ... | ... | ... | 1748 |
| Thomas ... | ... | ... | ... | 1511 |
| Hill ... | ... | ... | ... | 1392 |
| Bell ... | ... | ... | ... | 43 |

Throughout the Tory candidates stood no chance, and the return rested with

MESSRS. ELLICE AND WILLIAMS.

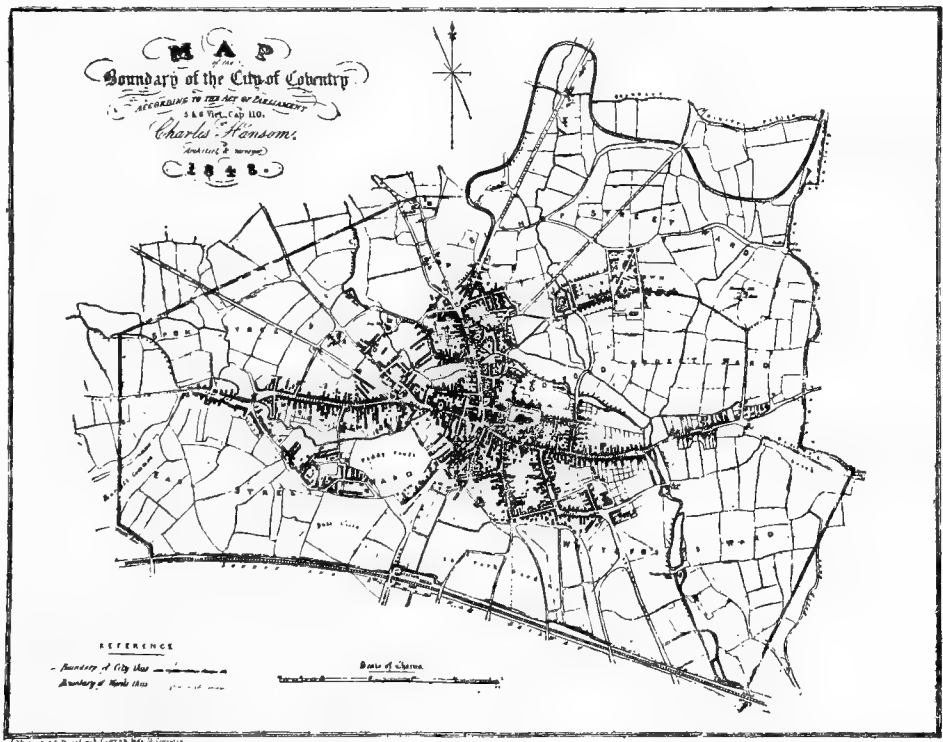
In November, the workmen at Messrs. Vale and Rotherham's watch manufactory, Coventry, presented Mr. Thomas with an exceedingly fine gold watch, in appreciation of his candidature.

Coventry celebrated the Queen's Coronation on the 28th June, 1838, with general rejoicings.

The Stamp Duty payable, under the Act 55 George III., c. 184, upon the admission of a Freeman was 20s. Many objected to the payment, and it was often paid for them by the party to which they belonged, with the other small fees attending it, but partially through Mr. Williams's instrumentality, an Act, 1 and 2 Vict., cap. 35, was obtained, abolishing the Stamp Duty, which came into force on the 4th July.

On 23rd March, 1838, the London and Birmingham Railway had so far advanced that an engine, and five carriages full of officials, arrived at Coventry from Rugby, and on 17th September the whole way was opened. Owing, however, to the mistaken policy pursued; to avoid giving large prices for urban land, and paying high rates; Coventry, like other places, suffered from being at a distance from a station. Mr. Stevenson carried his line northward at Rugby, towards Birmingham, and took a direct line from the Sowe river bridge to the south of Coventry, by easy gradients got into the Fletchamstead valley, and changing the course somewhat southward, reached Birmingham. At Coventry, the line crossed the Park estate and the Lammas lands. It revolutionized the coach traffic. Members, their friends, and voters, hitherto coming by road, often stayed for days in the City during an election; but the railway, and the shorter time of polling, caused less money to be spent at such periods, and many of the old road inns to be done away with.

The Birmingham Chartists riots occasioned considerable excitement in July, and on the 26th, a Chartist meeting was to have been held in Cross Cheaping, Coventry, but adjourned to Greyfriars Green. Mr. Fergus O'Conner's paper on the pulling down of property in Birmingham was read, and an address on Chartism delivered. When the Dowager Queen Adelaide passed through Coventry on her way from Gopsall Hall to Warwick Castle, on the 1st of November, the Chartists invited "the half-starved weavers," by inflammatory handbills, "to contrast the difference between their wretched condition and the splendour surrounding Her Majesty." This was just before the Newport riots. The Mayor and Corporation of Coventry loyally met the Queen at the City boundary on the Leicester Road, and accompanied her in procession to the limit of their jurisdiction towards Kenilworth.



PLAN OF COVENTRY, 1842: ILLUSTRATING THE NEW BOUNDARY; MR. C. HANSOM, SURVEYOR.

CHAPTER LXXIV.

CORN LAW TIMES ; A TRIANGULAR CONTEST ; LOWERING THE DUTIES.

Victoria, continued (1839 to 1846).

Mr. Williams's annual address—The Corn Laws—Petitions—Meetings interfered with—Bad trade—Peel's sliding scale—Royal marriage celebration—Mr. Williams in Committee—Free Trade propositions—Parliament dissolved—Mr. Ellice's address and views upon questions at issue—Proposed Conservative candidates—The address of Mr. Thomas Weir—His views—Actions of the Chartists—A voter's lament—Attempted intimidation—Nomination—Result of the crush—Large and small loaves on exhibit—Polling day—Numbers—Williams and Ellice returned—A damp charring—Sir Robert Peel forms a Cabinet—Coventry Boundary Act—Freemen's Seniority Fund—Mr. Ellice's second marriage—Riots at Whitley Mill—Local Acts—The duty reduced.



EARLY it was Mr. Williams's custom to address his constituents, either from the Half Moon Tavern balcony in Earl Street, or from that of the City Hotel ; usually with a white flag flying.

The disastrous effect of the Corn Law Act of 1815 in closing the ports upon foreign grain, until home-grown corn had reached 80s. per quarter, was apparent. By the efforts of the League on one side, and of the Agricultural Protectionist Societies on the other, an agitation was begun. Scarcely was there a town but petitioned Parliament for the repeal of "the bread tax," but the counties sent many for continuing it, and Warwickshire upwards of 200. An Anti-Corn Law handbill exclaims—

"Are you content to be thus stultified in the face of your country? Can you look upon the wasting forms of your wives and children, and be content with those Corn Law curses, *cheap labour and dear bread*? Rise, men of Warwickshire, and vindicate your County and yourselves from the gross calumny. Petition by dozens and half-dozens; wait not for thousands. Every Town, every Parish, every Trade, every Factory, every Street, every Worship, should petition instantly. If you have a drop of British blood in your veins, it should stir you to indignation and action."

Another bill shows the large "American loaf" of 16 lbs. for a shilling in that country, and compares it with "the British Corn Law loaf" of 6 lbs. The Magistrates of Coventry, as at other places, interfered with, and put a stop to meetings, but distress was spreading, and Coventry weavers, with bad trade and diminishing wages, felt the same keenly. In February, Sir Robert Peel proposed the sliding scale, which gave little satisfaction, and rendered the Conservatives unpopular.

The Queen's marriage with Prince Albert was celebrated in Coventry upon 10th February, 1840. During the spring, Mr. Williams sat upon the Committee of Inquiry on the duties levied upon imports.

Meanwhile, things were going bad for the Whig Administration. The Budget shewed a large deficiency, and increased timber and foreign sugar duties were proposed to meet it. Lord John Russell proposed to substitute a moderate fixed duty on corn in place of the sliding scale, and the Government proposals as to the sugar duties were condemned by a majority of 36, which was followed by Sir Robert Peel's vote of non-confidence in the Government being carried by a majority of one, whereupon Lord Russell decided to dissolve Parliament, which was accordingly done on the 23rd June, 1841.

One of the chief issues of the General Election was Free Trade. The Tory party made great efforts to secure Protectionist candidates, and the Chartists opposed the Anti-Corn Law men. Mr. Ellice issued his address on the 14th June, which was a long one, and explained the "struggle for Reform in our Fiscal System," in which the country was called to engage. With reference to the matter and the Coventry trade, in his own view, he said—

"When a revision of the Commercial Code was proposed by Mr. Huskisson, my opposition to the measures then applied to the Silk Trade did not arise from any objection to the principles on which they were founded. The repeal of the duty on the raw material at that time was a boon. The substitution of the largest duty which could be enforced on the importation of foreign goods for an impracticable prohibition was reasonable and right, both for the protection of the trade and of the revenue, against the frauds of the smuggler. But I felt that your apprehensions of even that interference with your manufacture might be well founded, unless the changes then made were accompanied by general ones on the same principle in other branches of the trade. Your case was an exceptional one, and was entitled to the greatest indulgence. The main element in the value of your lighter and finer fabrics was the cost of labour. Surely, if Protection was justifiable anywhere, it was where the existence and fortunes of a large class of people were engaged beyond their power of withdrawing from it, in the only manufacture in which, from various circumstances, our foreign rivals had an acknowledged superiority. We pleaded these points in vain—we were obliged to submit—and we have been threatened, from time to time, with still further alterations. What has been the course pursued to assist you in bearing up against the trial to which you were thus exposed? No relaxation has taken place in the Corn Laws; and the artisan, compelled to submit to a competition which has reduced his wages, has been obliged for the last twenty years to pay nearly double the price which the labourer in Lyons and Switzerland has had to pay for his bread. Prohibition, which we were told was to be blotted out from the Statute Book, was indeed abolished in the case of the Silk Trade. Is it because oxen and sheep, meat and fish are not so easily smuggled as silk, that the prohibition to import them must continue, even although we should be threatened with famine, from murrain, or any other cause? Or is it because the Legislature cannot, or will not, deal with the great landowners, or the great monopolists of the few salmon fisheries, on the same principles on which they have dealt with the poor silk weaver?"

The Conservatives and Chartists at Coventry cavilled upon the questions of Free Trade and the Poor Laws. The former attempted to secure a candidate. The address of Mr. Robert Gyll, of Wallgrave House, Chelsea, appeared on the 24th, and Captain Tinnie, who had been contesting Barnstaple, was interviewed, but neither stood the contest, and on the 25th the address of Mr. Thomas Weir, dated from the King's Head, Coventry, came out, declaring himself to be a Conservative, with no desire for place. He believed the policy of the Whigs had been injurious to the kingdom and the working classes. He would support an alteration in the Corn Laws, but was opposed to Free Trade, and anxious for the re-establishment of the Prohibitory Laws, declaring a

general Free Trade to be an Utopian scheme. Speeches now became the order of the day. Meanwhile, "The Coventry Branch of the National Charter Association" called upon the men of Coventry to reject the Whig candidates.

The election was dull, and the spice of former contests lost, as appears from the views of a no doubt worthy voter, who thus expresses himself—

" We've joined in many 'lection speers
And many a party row,
But oh! what short and sober jobs
Are all elections now.
'Twas then mob law for fourteen days
Of riot and drunken fray,
But now we've done with all such fun—
They only last a day."

The Whigs endeavoured to intimidate Mr. Weir, and told him that as he was "the best-looking image of the two candidates, he was to be the Tory idol," but, said the writer, "Take care, Sir, of your pockets, for this is a changing scene;" undaunted, however, by threat or insult, he decided to go through the contest at all odds.

The Liberal and Tory parties collected their forces, and met at the hustings for the nomination on Monday morning. Some confusion was created by a tremendous crush upon the front of the booth, which gave way, and but for the united exertions of all parties within to resist and keep off the pressure, the timber fabric must have fallen. Mr. Ellice was proposed and seconded by Messrs. A. H. Pears and G. Baddeley; Mr. Williams by Messrs. W. Clarke and J. Hilton; and Mr. Weir by Messrs. T. Cope and R. K. Rotherham, and the show of hands was in favour of the two former. All the candidates spoke from their headquarters, Captain Ellice speaking for his brother. Both parties rallied the Town. In the Liberal rally a large loaf, with mazarine and white ribbons, was exhibited on a poll, followed by another of diminutive size decorated with light Blue, ticketed "Sliding Scale."

On Tuesday morning the polling commenced at eight, and for two hours Mr. Weir was ahead. By eleven both Ellice and Williams had a majority, and "the Tory candidate rapidly went down the sliding scale." During the last two hours Mr. Williams's friends plumped him, a manoeuvre "more clever than wise," says "the Herald," and the result of the poll, as declared by Mr. J. Herbert, the Sheriff, was—

| | | | | | | | |
|----------|-----|-----|------|----------|------|------|----------|
| Williams | ... | ... | 1870 | of which | 145 | were | plumpers |
| Ellice | ... | ... | 1829 | " | 137 | " | " |
| Weir | ... | ... | 1290 | " | 1131 | " | " |

And 3,200 Electors had polled out of 3,789, consequently

MESSRS. WILLIAM WILLIAMS AND EDWARD ELLICE

were elected, and with their Liberal friends rallied the Town, amidst great enthusiasm, although it rained in torrents. Speeches, dinners, and "wetting the inner man" followed.

The elections went in favour of the Conservatives. Soon after the Ministry retired, and Sir Robert Peel formed a Conservative Cabinet.

The new Boundary Act of 1842 put an end to the ancient jurisdiction of Coventry, and assigned a new boundary to the City. It extinguished the offices of Recorder and Sheriff. Mr. Long, who held the former office, retired from it, and the Mayor became Returning Officer at Parliamentary elections.

In April, 1843, the Freemen's Seniority Fund was established. The first money was for compensation, for right of pasturage over certain lands taken in 1828-9 for the improvement of the Holyhead Road, the second for the pasturage over Lammas lands taken for the construction of the London and Birmingham Railway. The entire amount of both accounts was then £2,476 4s. At meetings on the 19th, presided over by Mr. A. H. Pears, Mayor, Trustees were appointed, and it was resolved that the income should be paid in sums of 6s. per week, to the most aged Freemen, who should claim such weekly payments, according to their seniority of admission to the freedom, during their respective lives—a principle which has worked well from that time upwards.

The marriage of Mr. Ellice with the Lady Anne, Dowager Countess of Leicester, was celebrated on 25th October, 1843, but that lady died 22nd July in the following year.

For some years there had been disturbances at the annual riding on Lammas day. The Freemen, in asserting their rights to a portion of Common land enclosed by a miller named Liggins at Whitley Mill, pulled down a wall he had erected. On the 13th August, 1844, about 2,000 persons assembled on Whitley Common, and after demanding entrance into the enclosed ground, had a sharp contest with some police on the spot, and pulled the wall down. A number of them were taken before the Warwickshire Magistrates at Anstey, and bound over to appear at the ensuing Sessions; whereat Messrs. Spooner and Mellor were their counsel, and after a long hearing, a verdict was returned of "not guilty,"

In 1844 the Waterworks, Cemetery, and Coventry Improvement Acts, were passed.

The duty of about 30 per cent. *ad valorem* continued from 1824 to 1846, when, under Sir Robert Peel, the duties were lowered about one half, and brought down to a per weight duty, amounting to about 15 per cent. *ad valorem*. This, from forced necessity, the Coventry weaver acquiesced in.



CHAPTER LXXV.

A CONSERVATIVE GAIN.

Victoria, continued (1846 to 1850).

Sir Robert Peel's changed views—Divides Conservative party—Corn Law Bill passed—Sir Robert's defeat—A new Ministry—Parliament dissolved—Messrs. Ellice and Williams come forward—Mr. George James Turner, a Conservative, also—His views—The Chartist candidate, Mr. Robert Norris—His withdrawal—Speeches—Nomination—Polling—Numbers—Mr. E. Ellice and Mr. G. J. Turner returned—Testimonial to Mr. Williams—His returns for Lambeth—Mr. Turner's biography—How the charring money was paid—Additional local railway accommodation.



SIR ROBERT PEEL became estranged from the Conservative party through change of opinions respecting the Corn Laws and Free Trade. The Corn Importation Bill passed in May, but the Ministry was defeated afterwards, and resigned in June, 1846, when Lord John Russell formed a Cabinet.

The Parliament was dissolved on 23rd July, 1847, and the election at Coventry quickly followed. Both Mr. Ellice and Mr. Williams issued addresses, and Mr. George James Turner, a Chancery Barrister, came forward. Although a Conservative, he was bound by no tie to either section of that party, but "disposed towards the line of policy adopted by Sir Robert Peel." He was attached to the Established Church, and would "look to any measures which may be brought forward without reference to the quarter from which they may proceed, with a strong disposition, on the one hand, to support such as may be calculated to give full effect to the liberal policy lately adopted to trade and commerce, and on the other hand, to resist such as may endanger existing interests, when the benefit resulting from the change cannot be calculated or foreseen." He favoured measures for the benefit and relief of the working classes, but, as "he was no Radical," refused to vote for "Universal Suffrage." Whilst Mr. Turner's opponents objected that he was a lawyer seeking place, his speeches show he had considerable knowledge of the political problems of the time.

The address of Mr. Robert Norris, a Chartist, who "would go the whole hog," also appeared, but when "the Nonconformist Association" had settled "minor points" with, and asked the united suffrage for, Messrs. Ellice and Williams, he resigned.

All candidates addressed meetings—Mr. Ellice from the Craven Arms, Mr. Turner from the King's Head, and Mr. Williams from "the balcony of the late Half Moon, now unoccupied." At the nomination on Wednesday, Mr. Turner and Mr. Ellice had good receptions, whilst Mr. Williams's was the opposite. Alderman F. Sergeant and

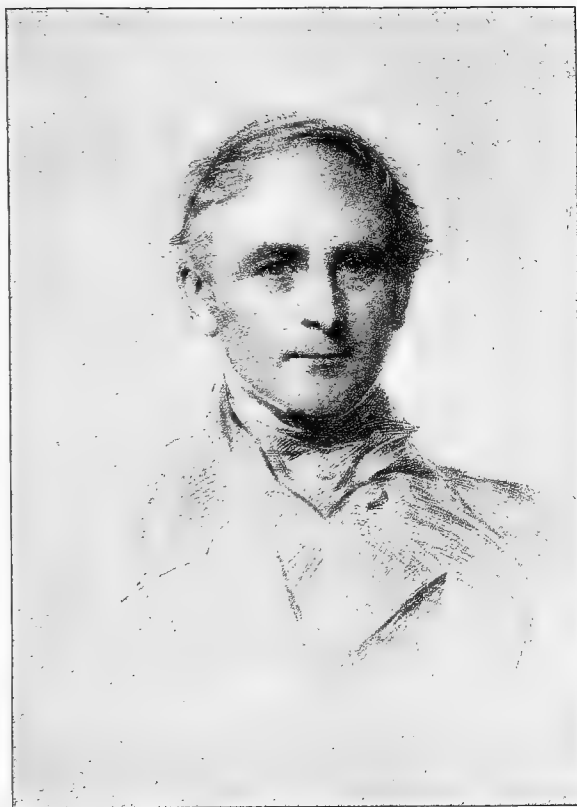


W. Williams

WILLIAM WILLIAMS, Esq.,

M.P. for Coventry, 1835.

Died, 1865.



G. J. Turner Charles Geach

GEORGE JAMES TURNER, Esq.,

(Afterwards Sir GEORGE J. TURNER),

M.P. for Coventry, 1847.

Died, 1867.

CHARLES GEACH, Esq.,

M.P. for Coventry, 1851.

Died, 1854.

Mr. T. Goode nominated Mr. Ellice; Messrs. H. Browett and H. Gardner, Mr. Williams; whilst Messrs. Aldermen Cope and R. K. Rotherham did the like for Mr. Turner. Messrs. Ellice and Turner had the show, and a poll was demanded for Mr. Williams. None of the candidates could be heard.

The poll opened at the various booths at eight on Thursday morning. At eleven o'clock it stood—Ellice 873, Turner 477, Williams 467, and the final statement shewed—

| | | | | |
|----------|-----|-----|-----|------|
| Ellice | ... | ... | ... | 2901 |
| Turner | ... | ... | ... | 1754 |
| Williams | ... | ... | ... | 1633 |

when Mr. Turner's majority being 121 over Mr. Williams,

MR. EDWARD ELLICE AND MR. GEORGE JAMES TURNER

were returned on 29th July.

Mr. Ellice's majority was a large one, he was supported by many of his late opponents votes, and, from his headquarters, said "he could not express how greatly he prized the honour they had conferred upon him again." Mr. Turner also thanked the Electors.

A testimonial was presented to Mr. Williams, in January, 1848, from his Coventry friends, and he was chosen for Lambeth at a bye-election 7th August, 1850, re-elected in 1852, 1857, and 1859, sitting for that borough until his death in April, 1865.

Mr. George J. Turner (afterwards Sir George Turner) was one of a large family, and was born in 1798 at Great Yarmouth, where his father, the Rev. Richard Turner, was for 30 years the Minister. His education commenced at the Charterhouse, and finished at Pembroke College, Cambridge, under his uncle, Dr. Joseph Turner, Dean of Norwich, then Master. In 1819 he took his degree, and was elected a Fellow of Pembroke College. Entering Lincoln's Inn, he was called to the Bar in 1821. In 1840 he became a Queen's Counsel. He married, in 1823, Louisa, daughter of Mr. Edward Jones, of Brackley, Northamptonshire. The unvarying kindness and courtesy which he shewed to everyone whilst sitting as Member for Coventry, and the patient attention given to all local matters, made him many personal friends. In 1851 he was selected as one of the Vice Chancellors, and in 1853 promoted to the place of Lord Justice of the Court of Appeal, serving in the Court of Chancery as an upright and conscientious judge. He died in 1867.

The following handbill is certainly curious. It explains how "the charring money" was paid at the late election—

"TO THE INDEPENDENT FREEMEN AND TEN POUND ELECTORS
OF THE CITY OF COVENTRY.

GENTLEMEN,—Ever since the Charter was granted to your City to return Two Members to the Commons House of Parliament, it has been the custom for the successful Candidates at an Election to have a CHAIRING through the principal streets of the Town, and to pay each Elector

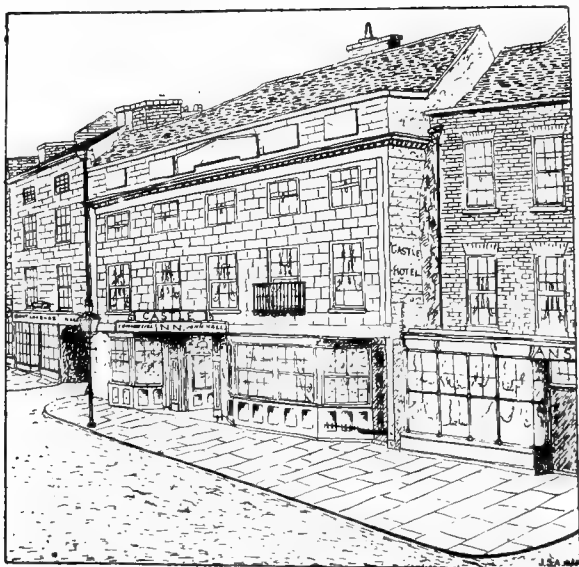
who voted for them FIVE SHILLINGS for the loss of his Day's Work on that day. The Committees of the late Election have great pleasure to inform you that the time is passed for it to be deemed Bribery to pay the *Chairing Money*, and as they have received positive orders to keep up the good old custom, the two Candidates have agreed to pay the same *on Saturday morning next, at 10 o'clock*. The Liberal Friends of the Right Hon. E. Ellice will be Paid at the *Craven Arms Inn*; the Friends of Mr. Turner will be Paid at the *King's Head Inn*; and the *Conservative Blues* who split their Votes for Mr. Turner will be Paid by a *Deputation* from each Committee at the *Rose Inn*, Much Park Street. A Ward Committee from each Ward will be in attendance at the places of Payment, to prevent unworthy Persons obtaining the Chairing Money.

COMMITTEE ROOM, KINGS HEAD INN,
March 30th, 1848.

BY ORDER OF THE COMMITTEES.

R. Astill, Printer, Hertford Street, Coventry."

The Coventry, Bedworth, and Nuneaton Railway was commenced in 1847. It was completed and opened April, 1850. The Coventry and Leamington line was also made.



THE CASTLE HOTEL, COVENTRY: HEAD-QUARTERS OF
SIR JOSEPH PAXTON, KT., 1859.

CHAPTER LXXVI.

RADICAL *versus* WHIG-LIBERAL.

Victoria, continued (1851).

Ministerial changes—Mr. Turner appointed Vice-Chancellor—"Incidents of the Coventry Election, 1851," by a man without a vote—Right Hon. Edward Strutt appears in the Whig-Liberal interest—His biography—"The Coventry Herald" on the candidate—Mr. Strutt makes the King's Head his quarters—His speech—Expectation of a walk-over—Sunday talk—Mr. Charles Geach—Brought by "the National Parliamentary and Reform Association"—His arrival on the morning of nomination—Description of the mob before the booth—The nomination at the booth "Not unlike a Punch and Judy Show"—Geach has the show of hands—The two Reformers and their pretensions—The day of election—Scenes at the booth—The object of bribery—Conservatives poll "Geach"—Final polling—Mr. Charles Geach chosen—Chairing the victor—The new Member's introduction to the House—His biography.



ORD JOHN RUSSELL'S Administration was defeated on Mr. Lock King's motion to assimilate the county and borough franchises, and resigned in February, 1851. Lord Stanley was unable to form a Protectionist Ministry, and when Lord Aberdeen declined to assist Lord Russell; owing to his action against the Catholics; at the Queen's request, Ministers retained offices.

Mr. Turner was appointed Vice-Chancellor in March, and an election ensued at Coventry, the incidents of which were poetically described "by a man without a vote."

"A certain Barrister was made M.P.,
By some manœuvre, (how I do not know,)
For the old loyal Town of Coventry;
His creed political I will forego
To mention, since it is but trumpery,
As all his votes in Parliament will show.
He went, like all the rest, to seek a place:
This is the common custom of the race.

He's got one now—I wish him joy of it!
Long may he live to be the Senate's tool,
Long may he in official glory sit,
And laugh derisive at the patriot fool,
Who, when he takes his Senatorial seat,
Doth make his country's good his aim and rule;
'That man,' he chuckles, 'never will be great,
He's too much principle to suit the State.'

So having thus ensconced him in his berth,
As snug, in common parlance, as a bug
Rolled comfortably up on a warm hearth,
Within the folds of a luxurious rug,
Our Barrister looked down upon the earth
In cool complacency, and mighty snug;
Thus half the Town was left unrepresented,
A circumstance not quite unprecedented."

The retiring address of Mr. Turner, and another one announcing the candidature of the Right Hon. Edward Strutt, in the Whig-Liberal interest, appeared almost together on the 2nd April. Mr. Strutt was the son of Mr. William Strutt, one of the three sons of Mr. Jedidiah Strutt, the large mill owners and manufacturers of Derby, who, by establishing their works at Belper, near that Town, had raised that small village into a large and thriving community. He had been educated at Trinity College, Cambridge, and took honours. His father died in 1830, and on 31st July in the same year, he was returned for Derby, and held the seat through eight successive choosings, until his election in 1848 was declared void. He had early advocated Free Trade and the repeal of the Corn Laws, and held office upon the Railway Board, in 1846-8 being Chief Commissioner of Railways, and was made a Privy Counsellor. He presented the Arboretum to Derby. His wife was Amelia, daughter of Bishop Otter, of Chichester. After his defeat at Coventry in 1851, he was chosen for Arundel, in Sussex, on 17th July following, and in July, 1852, for Nottingham, being re-elected, after appointment, as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, in January, 1853. He retired from the House of Commons in 1856, and was raised to the Peerage as Baron Belper. His Lordship died 30th June, 1880.

Mr. Strutt was brought into Coventry, and introduced to the Electors by Mr. Cleophas Ratcliffe (Mayor 1839) and other manufacturers, and bills against "the Derby Cotton Lord" soon appeared. "The Coventry Herald," acknowledging that Mr. Strutt was for going faster than "the Whig slow-coaches," preferred a man of the independent section and increasing minority of 90 in the House of Commons, and said that "a fast Whig" was "a kind of person it has never been our good fortune to meet with, at least, in office; out of office the Whigs are generally fast enough." The poem continues:

"'Twas thought that, being near a dissolution,
 No candidate would come into the field,
 To spend his breath and waste his elocution
 For such brief glory as the cause would yield;
 Folks were mistaken—Strutt summoned resolution,
 And to the Freemen of the Town appealed.
 What will not man do, when unto his name
 He fain would stick a tail to spread his fame!

'Electors, I do understand,' says he,
 'That your most honoured representative
 Vacates his seat for ancient Coventry;
 Now Freemen and Electors, I do give
 My testimony to his honesty,
 And I shall e'er respect him while I live—
 A gentleman in every word and deed,
 Although I differ from him in my creed.

I've been, my friends, to Parliament before,
 I like it much, and wish to go again;
 I'm an experienced man, and, what is more,
 I am—well, never mind; if, gentlemen,
 You wish to know my conduct heretofore,
 I do refer all honest, candid men
 To con my votes, and by them you may judge
 Of my past course, from which I will not budge.'"

Mr. Strutt had taken up his quarters at the Tory house, the King's Head, and his speech from the balcony was much disturbed by noise. The election was near, and his Committee little imagined opposition would be forthcoming.

"Supposing any other man should come!
 However, as no other one appeared,
 Good Master Strutt felt very much at home,
 Rejoiced to think the course was so well cleared;
 And, as he heard the opposition drum,
 Said to himself, 'There's nothing to be feared!
 'Tis useless, my good friends, you going round,
 I've only just to walk straight o'er the ground.'

* * * * *

And all that night ('twas Saturday, you know),
 And far into the morn, which ushered in
 The day of rest, the mob passed to and fro
 With drums and fifes—a most infernal din;
 The Town folks no repose could get, although
 So tired: no sooner were they locked within
 The arms of Morpheus, than a sudden shout
 Disturbed their dreams, and put the god to rout.

'Twas Sunday! Yet no opposition came,
 And Monday is the day of nomination;
 An Irish lord (I never heard his name),
 So goes report, had a long consultation
 With a known gentleman of legal fame.
 Whatever may have been their conversation,
 One fact is certainly beyond dispute,
 He went back as he came—he would not suit.

The Town folks went to Church, as was their wont,
 And seemed quite as devout as e'er they were;
 But I have heard, and you may depend on't,
 Far other thoughts did fill their minds at prayer
 Than pure devotional, whatever front
 Their countenances might seem to wear;
 And when the parson said, 'Friends, let us pray,'
 Responded they, 'Will Strutt have his own way?'"

"The Coventry Branch of the National Parliamentary and Financial Reform Association" sounded Mr. Strutt as to his views upon Household Suffrage, the Ballot, Electoral Districts, Triennial Parliaments, and Financial Reform, and as his answers were not satisfactory to them, asked Mr. Charles Geach, a well-known Birmingham banker, to contest Coventry. He accepted, and early on the nomination morning, Monday, the 7th, handbills announced his coming

"To this effect: 'The Radicals have found
 A man who'll take the field—'tis banker Geach,
 Of Birmingham, a gentleman of sound
 Good sense, and one who'll nobly fill the breach
 That has been made, and firmly stand his ground
 'Gainst tyranny and wrong, and like a leech
 Stick to his whack; come then, my boys, and never
 Say die. Huzza boys! Geach for ever!'"

Mr. Geach's late arrival at Coventry, followed by a speech made by him from the City Hotel, caused a sensation amongst the Whigs, and his address was soon in print.

"The folks, like bees, went buzzing in and out
Each other's homes, to spread the news about."

The nomination at the large booth erected in Broadgate is thus graphically described by the "man without a vote"—

"Well! here I am, and yonder stands the booth,
But getting to it—how must that be done? .
For here, in this belligerent mob, forsooth,
Jammed—wedged as tight as ramrod in a gun,
I cannot stir an inch; but rough or smooth,
Here goes! and so, with shove and push, I'm borne
Upon their bosoms, looking very brave,
Just like a cork upon the ocean wave,

And come to anchor just the booth before.

To anchor, did I say? Good gracious me,
That's a mistake! They rolled me o'er and o'er,
I mean they turned me round, and ruthlessly
Pitched me about till, from my every pore,

The perspiration ran o'erflowingly,
And every now and then they'd dab my hat
Right o'er my eyes, and knock the crown in flat.

Now stand I on my feet, and now I'm heaved
Straight off, and *terra firma* cannot feel.

At length I'm firmly fixed; no, I'm deceived,
For now an adverse push, with whizzing reel,
Bears me full ten yards back, and I'm received
By an opposing force, who, with a squeal,
Do catch me up triumphantly, and then
Repulse and send me back again.

* * * * *
There stands the Mayor, and with him Strutt and Geach,
And there's the Town Clerk, spectacles on nose,
Reading the laws down with a frightful screech;
And perched upon the roof, like moulting crows,
Are samples of tag-rag and bob-tail, each
Original in himself—his looks, his hose,
If that's originality, which lacks all shape,
All parallel, and does no fashion ape."

The Mayor was Mr. Brian Dunn, and the Town Clerk Mr. Thomas Ball Troughton. The High Sheriff's precept for the election being read, Mr. Strutt's proposer and seconder were Messrs. A. H. Pears and D. Smith; those of Mr. Geach, Messrs. H. Browett and W. H. Hill. Both candidates spoke, Mr. Strutt being greatly interrupted. The "man without a vote," in describing the proceedings as "not unlike a Punch and Judy Show," continues—

"Such was the mob. Now to the booth we turn,
In order all proceedings there to trace.
After each man had promised, as I learn,
What he would do when in 'another place,'
Would they but honour him in his return,
The Mayor rose up, and showed his smiling face.
The show of hands is taken, and, I see,
Geach has a great majority."

Of the two Reformers, there was little to choose between them. Mr. Strutt was favourable to giving the franchise in finality, after the people had been educated to receive it; Mr. Geach to extend the suffrage immediately to all householders. Both desired to have the ballot. Mr. Strutt favoured freedom in civil and religious matters, and educational measures for the people; he supported the Government. Mr. Geach advocated triennial Parliaments, reduction of taxation, coupled with economy; he was Independent. The election took place on the 8th.

"This being what is called the day of polling,
Our good friends Strutt and Geach are measuring strength,
And to each booth the carriages are rolling,
Some bearing drunkards, stretched out all their length,
The dupes of smooth committee-men's cajolings;
While of the whole, perhaps in part a tenth,
Are honest men, who vote for principle
And motives of true worth intrinsic.

One thing is evident, say what you will!
There's no election but where bribery
Is practised with the most consummate skill,
So much so that it baffles scrutiny.
If you inebriate a willing man, and fill
His stomach from the lap of luxury,
And pay a debt for him becoming due,
In such a case, what end have you in view?"

When the poll opened, "Geach got the start, and kept it,—so he won." The Conservatives having no candidate, with their usual antipathy to the Whigs, went for the more Radical candidate; upwards of 600 voted "Geach," and the result was—

| | | | |
|----------------------|-----|-----|------|
| C. Geach, Esq. | ... | ... | 1669 |
| Right Hon. E. Strutt | ... | ... | 1104 |
| Majority for Geach | | | 565 |

Out of 4,223 voters on the register, no less than 1,450 did not poll. Afterwards the victor was taken round the City.

"And having won, he mounted on a car,
Amidst a host of friends—and noisy chaps,
Who tore their throats with roaring 'tal-lal-la!'
And spinning in the air twirled up their caps.
Geach rode triumphant, like a jolly tar,
Smiled at the ladies, and, why not?—perhaps
Threw now and then a kiss at them, while they
Waved kerchiefs, and strewed flowerets in the way."

MR. CHARLES GEACH,

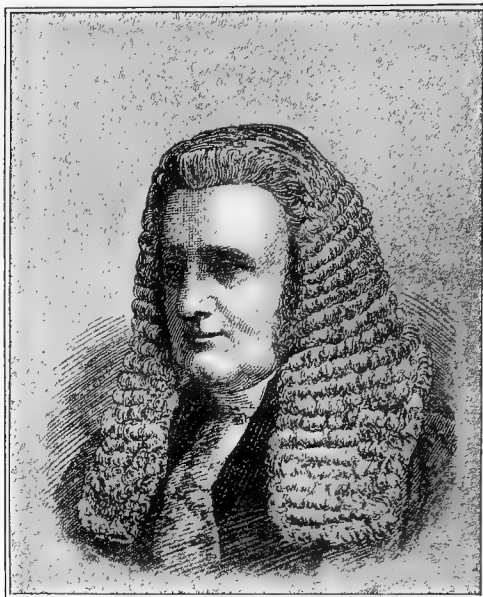
who forty-eight hours before was personally unknown to the Electors, became Member, and was introduced to the House by Mr. W. Williams (Lambeth) and Mr. W. Scholefield (Birmingham).

The new Member was born in Cornwall in 1808. He became a clerk in the Bank of England at London, and in 1826 was advanced, for his ability, to a higher position in its new Birmingham branch. He married a Miss Skally, of Villa Cross; and when the Birmingham and Midland Bank commenced business in 1836, Mr. Geach became Manager, and went to reside on its premises. In 1839, during the disturbances which led up to the Bull Ring riots, he received information that precautions should be taken for the safety of the Bank. The mob met at, and near, Dale End, and Mr. Geach, under the advice of the Magistrates who were present, went to the barracks. He was well mounted, and having to face the mob, galloped through them, amidst a shower of stones. "Stop him!" "Pull him off!" "He is going for the soldiers!" were the cries raised, but the horse took him safely through. He reached Brook Street barracks, and obtained the needed assistance, whereby the expected attack was averted and the town saved from violence. About 1842, Mr. Geach purchased a large share of the Park Gate Iron Manufacturing Company at Rotherham, near Sheffield, then an unprofitable concern, but improved by the new management, who carefully looked after it. During the railway mania of 1844-5, Mr. Geach made great profits by this industry, at one time taking "three orders for 30,000 tons of railway iron at £12, which did not cost over £6 per ton." The "Patent Shaft and Axletree Company" owed its origin chiefly to him. He was a partner in a manufactory at Dudley, and largely contracted for several Railway Companies. Entering the Birmingham Town Council about the year 1840, he was chosen an Alderman, and served as Mayor in 1847. Tall, and of stout build, he had an agreeable manner and countenance, and was ever ready to listen to his constituents of either side. Mr. Ellice paid him the compliment of saying he was the best colleague he ever sat with. "His grip of the hand was firm and cordial." It is said he had the largest head in Birmingham, and that his hats had to be made especially for him. After his election for Coventry, he became the host of Louis Kossuth, and presided at the Hungarian patriot's meeting in Birmingham. His large and extensive transactions at home and on the Continent requiring much personal attention, he resigned his position as Manager of the Bank about 1847, but was afterwards appointed Managing Director. The shareholders presented him with a costly service of plate, and a portrait of Mr. Geach, painted by Partridge, was hung in the board room of the Bank.

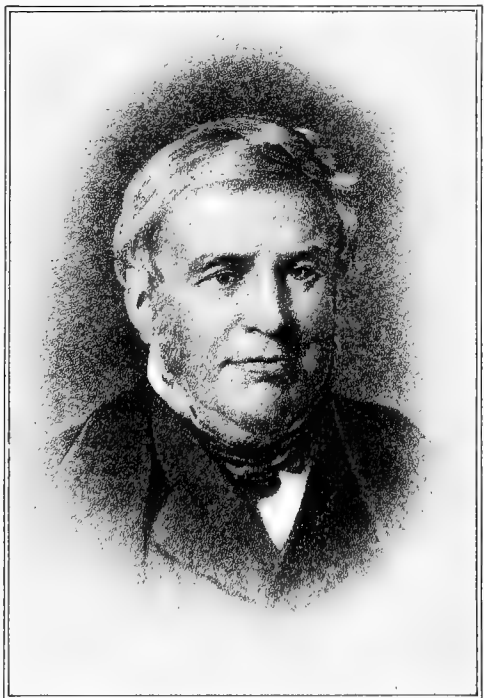




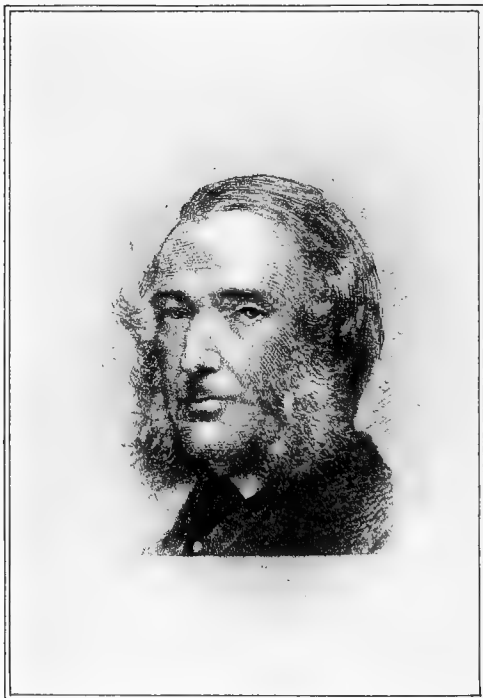
JOHN MELLOR, Esq., Q.C.,
Parliamentary Candidate for Coventry, 1857.
 (Afterwards the Hon. Sir John Mellor, Knt.)
 Died, 1887.



ROBERT JOSEPH PHILLIMORE, Esq., Q.C.,
Parliamentary Candidate for Coventry, 1857.
 (Afterwards the Rt. Hon. Sir. R. J. Phillimore, Bart.)
 Died, 1886.



THE RT. HON. EDWARD STRUTT,
Parliamentary Candidate for Coventry, 1861.
 Created Baron Belper, 1866.
 Died, 1880.



JOHN GELLIBRAND HUBBARD, Esq.,
Parliamentary Candidate for Coventry, 1852
 Created Baron Addington, 1887.
 Died, 1880.

CHAPTER LXXVII.

RUSSELLITES AND DERBYITES.

Victoria, continued (1852).

Resignation of Lord Russell's Cabinet—Lord Derby's Tory Administration—Dissolution and General Election—Votes of Mr. Geach—"The Herald" and the Dissenters—"The Coventry Times"—Addresses of Messrs. Ellice and Geach—The latter and the Papal Aggression Bill—An unfortunate slip—Mr. J. G. Hubbard, a Liberal-Conservative, comes forward—Account of him—His views on the Roman question—His address—Parodied—"Vote for the Cupboard, and not for Hubbard"—Other local productions—Mr. Hubbard's speech interrupted—Mr. Ellice's arrival—Is joined in the rally by Mr. Geach—Mr. Ellice denies he had united with him—Mr. Hubbard's withdrawal—Nomination—No opposition—"Derbyite," "Russellite," or "No-ite"—Messrs. Ellice and Geach again chosen—The after-biography of Mr. Hubbard.



WHEN Lord Russell and the Whig Government resigned, after a defeat on the Militia Bill, Lord Derby was called upon to form an Administration. He chose Disraeli—the leader of the Tory party in the Commons, who advocated Protection—in preference to the Peelites. It soon became apparent that the sense of the country was required to be taken as to this new Administration, and Parliament was dissolved on 1st July, 1852, when a General Election followed.

The votes of Mr. Geach, who was allied to the Cobden-Bright party, did not please a few of his late supporters, although given with the utmost conscientiousness. Some desired to return Mr. Ellice unopposed, and others declared they would make no promises, or vote for Mr. Geach.

In May, the supposed shortcomings of the only Liberal organ in Coventry—"the Herald"—had given some dissatisfaction to a portion of the Dissenters. The editor, Mr. Charles Bray, the author of "Philosophy of Necessity," who had made a change in the reporting staff, for a time staved off opposition, not, however, without a wordy handbill controversy. "The Coventry Times" issued its first impression on Friday, June 29th, 1855.

Both Mr. Ellice and Mr. Geach issued addresses. The latter had voted against Lord Russell's "Papal Aggression" Bill, and it was expected that "the Romanists" would vote for him to a man. Although he declared an attachment to the Established Church, opponents made a strong point against him through his sympathies with the Bill and the Papal party. On 24th June, after a rally with his friends; supporting

Mazarine and Pink ; he addressed the Electors from the Castle Hotel, then his headquarters, and alluded to charges made against him "of being a Catholic or Jesuit in disguise." He said "that he was a Churchman, that his father was a Churchman, and that his mother was a Churchman." But although immediately correcting himself, opponents made much ado about this slip, to his detriment and annoyance.

On 22nd June the address of Mr. John Gellibrand Hubbard, of 24, Prince's Gate, London, "Deputy Governor of the Bank of England," appeared. Mr. Hubbard was born in 1805, being the eldest son of Mr. J. Hubbard, of Stratford Grove, Essex. He was educated at Bordeaux, entered his father's counting house in 1821, and subsequently became head of the firm of Hubbard and Co., Russian merchants, of St. Helen's Place. In 1837 he married the Hon. Maria, eldest daughter of William, Lord Napier, and becoming connected with important undertakings, was the next year elected a Director of the Bank of England. As a Churchman, "desirous of maintaining the religious character of the nation, concurrently with the recognition of civil and religious liberty extended impartially to all, and limited with reference to Romanists only, by the fact that with them *perfect toleration* means supremacy for their own creed and intolerance for others." He was a Free Trader and a Liberal-Conservative, opposed to the Maynooth grant, and rested his claims for representation upon his knowledge as a commercial man in general, and on his connection with the first banking establishment in the Empire in particular. Immediately the Radicals parodied his address in one signed "John Jellyboy Hubbord," alluding to the part he had taken in 1850 amongst the Puseyites and High Church clergy. Posters asked the Electors to "*Vote for the Cupboard, and not for Hubbard.*" Handbills addressed to his supporters, said—

"Beware!!! Do not promise your votes to Hubbard.

Judge of the man by the company he keeps. Are not the same men who vote for those Bigots and Protectionists, Spooner and Newdegate, for the County? He is the *Tool of a Tory Clique*. He will not give you the *Ballot*. He will not extend the *Suffrage*. *Vote for Geach, the Tried Friend of Civil and Religious Liberty.*

William Iliffe, Printer, Smithford Street, Coventry."

And another bill, "printed at 'the Herald' office," has—

"Beware of Wolves in Sheep's Clothing; or, A Nursery Rhyme for the Times.

J— G— Hubbard,
With an eye to your cupboard,
Cries, 'Give a poor Tory a BONE!'
But Voters, beware!
Should he ever get there,
You'll find your big LOAF will be gone."

On the 25th, Mr. Hubbard spoke from the balcony of the King's Head, his headquarters, but the assembly was interrupted by a rush of the Radical mob, and the uproar was so overpowering that speaking became for a time impossible. Mr. Hubbard was a fluent and forcible speaker, and the Geachites intended he should not be heard. A sky Blue (Conservative) and Mazarine (Whig-Liberal) flag, the colours of the Conservatives and of Mr. Ellice, was hoisted, which afforded the Radicals a pretext for

fighting. Hundreds of peaceable Electors were deterred from approaching the spot, but in spite of all, Mr. Hubbard persisted. He repeated that he was a true Free Trader, a true friend to civil and religious liberty ; dealt upon the Freemen of Coventry and their franchise, spoke of Sir George Turner's connection with Coventry, and declared his political principles, in spite of the hubbub and din of his opponents.

Mr. Ellice arrived in Town by train on the 28th ; he was met at the station by some thousands of inhabitants, and after parading the principal streets of the City, delivered a very able speech from the balcony of his head-quarters, the Craven Arms Hotel. He had been joined on the route by Mr. Geach and his friends, and the whole of them together made a great show. Mr. Ellice during the speech was asked, "What do you say to Mr. Geach going back with you?" He replied, "I acted in the most cordial manner with Mr. Geach, and my opinion of his conduct is that as I have acted cordially with him before, I shall cordially act with him again ; but if you choose to send another person, I shall act to the best of my ability with him ; but do not press me too hard upon these points," from which it would appear that he left himself open, and had not joined with Mr. Geach.

On the 2nd July, Mr. Hubbard, evidently smarting under the imputations thrown out by handbills and the Press, and seeing no chance of success, withdrew from the contest, and did not stop to be nominated. A considerable quantity of the old Blues of Mr. Ellice's party were known to be in favour of Mr. Hubbard rather than Mr. Geach, but it would appear that an actual, though not an avowed, coalition had been entered into between the Whigs and the extreme Liberal party.

On Monday, 5th, both Mr. Ellice and Mr. Geach were nominated ; and the Tories and Derbyites being unable to induce a third candidate to stand on their behalf, they were declared duly elected, thirty-six Electors signing the writs. Both the new Members returned thanks for their election, and addressed their constituents ; Mr. Ellice, now that the contest was over, declaring his preference for Mr. Geach in place of Mr. Hubbard, as he did not know whether he was a Derbyite or a Russellite ; to which a man in the crowd answered, "He's neither—he's a No-ite."

There were at this time 3,723 Freemen and 776 ten pound householders on the list of voters. Thus the City again returned

MR. EDWARD ELLICE AND MR. CHARLES GEACH.

Mr. Hubbard was a good candidate. From 1853 until his death he was Chairman of the Public Works Loan Commission. He was chosen as a Conservative for Buckingham in 1859 and 1868, and sat for London from 1874 to 1887, when he was raised to the Peerage, on 27th July, as Baron Addington, and sworn a member of the Privy Council. He was a recognized authority on financial matters in the House, and became a frequent speaker, his especial study being the Income Tax, Coinage, Education, and Ecclesiastical matters. He died 28th August, 1889.

CHAPTER LXXVIII.

THE UNOPPOSED RETURN OF A DISTINGUISHED MEMBER.

Victoria, continued (1853 to 1856).

Removal of the Assizes—Local apathy—Death of Mr. Charles Geach—Further biography—An election—The Liberal candidate, Sir Joseph Paxton—Coventry Cemetery plans—No Conservative forthcoming—Sir Joseph's views and opinions—His speech—A modern Dick Turpin—Nomination—Unopposed return of Sir Joseph Paxton—Biography—His interview with constituents—Present to Mr. Ellice—His gift to the City—Why called "Bear Ellice"—New Ministry of Lord Palmerston—Coventry Gas Company and their Amendment Act—Peace demonstration.



UNDER an Act of Parliament, upon complaint of the Judges, the Assizes were at this time removed from Coventry, to the no small inconvenience of the inhabitants of the Northern part of Warwickshire. Oddly enough, neither the Members, City Council, Press, or Citizens appear to have exerted themselves much to retain them, although the removal was felt to have been a mistake shortly afterwards.

The death of Mr. Charles Geach, on 1st November, 1854, occasioned universal regret in Coventry. A few years before, as he was riding in a hansom cab, the horse, becoming restive, kicked through the leather, and struck him on the leg, which remained weak afterwards. About a month before his death inflammation set in, causing intense agony; yet relying upon a strong and robust constitution, he was hopeful of recovery, and, to gratify his constituents, published a letter in the London papers, stating that although he was seriously ill, there was no danger. Unhappily, this was not so, and by his death Coventry lost a good and faithful representative. His last public appearance was at the Mechanics Institution on the 3rd October. He was but forty-six years of age, and left a widow and four children. Mr. Geach's business engagements were as varied as they were extensive. He was a partner in the Patent Axletree Works at Wednesbury, and in a manufacturing company near Dudley; he held shares to large amounts in various Railway Companies, and had very considerable contracts; with his large interests in the Park Gate Ironworks, he had expressed a desire to locate the iron trade at Coventry; he was a Director in the Crystal Palace Company, the Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire, and Shrewsbury and Birmingham Railway Companies; as also a promoter of the Western Railway in France, and other foreign undertakings.

The Conservatives, demoralized by Mr. Hubbard's late retreat, were unable to find a candidate, but the Liberals secured Sir Joseph Paxton, Knt., the designer of the

Crystal Palace. He had, shortly before, planned the laying out of the Coventry Cemetery, and his design transferred an old stone quarry into a place of singular beauty; by the introduction of "a *quasi* Norman Church, classic Chapel, and lodge, entrances, and terraces of the modern Italian style," which, added to the fine trees; and the shrubs subsequently introduced; constituted the Cemetery a fit and lasting resting-place for the City's dead, on the closing of the Churchyards in the Town.

Sir Joseph's first address is dated from "Rockhills, Sydenham, November 11th, 1854." Stating his adherence to Liberal measures, he declared in favour of the ballot and extended representation, the improved condition of the classes, and the strengthening of the constitution of Municipal bodies. He was a Reformer and Free Trader, and supported "all measures tending to carry out the Liberal commercial policy." He advocated the removal of trade restrictions, the giving of full civil and religious liberty, and the confirming and renovating of ancient institutions to the wants of the age. The Crimean War he considered just and inevitable, "with our gallant French neighbours we are defending the laws of nations against the aggressions of unprincipled ambition," but desired no peace unless it was a permanent one. In a speech on the 23rd, he said he disapproved somewhat of the method of conducting the war. His opinion was that the franchise should be extended to all householders, for he did not see the value of Lord Russell's £5 limit. "He was quite delighted with the advancement of the political knowledge of the Freemen of Coventry," and "should oppose to the uttermost any proposal to disfranchise so enlightened a body;" he complained that the Act would not allow him "to use Coventry ribbons, even where they were manufactured!"

An Elector relates his experience at this time as follows: "At Paxton's election I was in Smithford Street talking to an old Tory friend, who was mounted on horseback, when down came the howling Liberal mob, furious with drink, and shouting 'Paxton.' Before we could clear out of their way, they threw a large cow-cabbage, well besmeared with mud, which, with good aim, hit my friend upon the head, whilst another unsavoury missile hit me on the breast. I had put on a clean white shirt that morning, and I assure you it looked beautiful. Well, I beat a hasty retreat home, and changed; but my friend, who was a bold rider, was undaunted; and, in spite of their endeavours to seize his horse's head, dashed onward towards the King's Head at top speed. The mob tried to stop his course, but giving his horse the spur, and imitating Dick Turpin, he literally jumped over them, and rode through the enemy like the Cardigans at Balaclava! When we met afterwards, he said, 'Do you think, Bob, I was going to let a *little thing like that* stop me? Most decidedly not!'"

At the nomination on the 2nd December,

SIR JOSEPH PAXTON, KNT.,

was the only candidate proposed, and soon after took his seat in the House. He proposed the plan for the Army Works Corps, which proved so serviceable when sent

to the Crimea. Sir Joseph now paid a personal visit to each of his constituents, which gained him great popularity.

Sir Joseph Paxton, Knt., was born at Milton Bryant, Bedfordshire, in 1803. The son of humble parents, he became a gardener, and commenced working at the Horticultural Society's gardens at Chiswick for a few shillings a week. It happened that Paxton had a key of the gate leading into the Duke of Devonshire's grounds, and when His Grace wished to pass through the Society's establishment, the young gardener often opened the gate, from which circumstance an acquaintance sprang up between them, although the Duke did not know his name. When the office of head gardener at Chatsworth became vacant, the Duke, to the surprise of the management of the Horticultural Gardens, wrote asking them to send him "the young man that had that good voice, and used to open the gate," to fill it; to which they demurred, doubting Paxton's capabilities; but the Duke overruled their objections. At Chatsworth, Paxton's duties were at first confined to the gardens, where his conservatories covered an acre of ground, but afterwards extended to the management of the Duke's Derbyshire property. He soon became famous for his papers upon horticulture, but gained more as the designer of the Great Exhibition buildings of 1851 in Hyde Park. Several designs were submitted, and the "Westminster Review" published an article suggesting iron and glass as suitable materials. Sir Joseph, possibly adopting this idea, and whilst presiding at a Midland Railway committee meeting at Derby, roughly sketched upon a sheet of blotting paper a design for the Industrial Palace, and within ten days had fully completed plans and specifications, with which he journeyed by rail to London. Meeting Mr. Robert Stephenson, a member of the Royal Commission, in the carriage, that great engineer, on seeing the plans, declared them "worthy of the magnificence of Chatsworth, and a thousand times better than anything shown." At Mr. Stephenson's request, they were laid by Mr. Scott Russell, the Secretary, before the Commission, and the design approved. In the hands of good contractors, the work was well done, and Mr. Paxton received Knighthood. "After this, he practised as an engineer and architect, and had a residence at Darley, near Chatsworth, and another at Sydenham."

In 1855, Mr. Ellice's friends presented him with his portrait, by Grant, whilst he gave the City the painting of "Baccanali," by Luca Giordano, valued at one thousand guineas. The Ministry resigned, through the blame cast upon its conduct of the war in the Crimea, and Lord Palmerston formed a new one. Mr. Ellice was a member of Mr. Roebuck's Committee of Inquiry which followed, and in 1857 of the Hudson Bay Committee. The nickname of "Bear" was doubtless given to him, not from any trace of ferocity in his manner, but from his connection with the North West fur trade.

Gas Works were established in Coventry in 1821, and in 1856 the Company obtained a new Act of Parliament, with additional powers. War with Russia ended in April, 1856, when a peace demonstration took place at Coventry.



THE RT. HON. EDWARD ELLICE, M.P.



THE RT. HON. LADY HANNAH ELLICE.

THE RT. HON. EDWARD ELLICE, M.P.,
ADDRESSING THE FREEMEN AND ELECTORS FROM THE CRAVEN ARMS HOTEL,
COVENTRY.



Joseph Paxton

SIR JOSEPH PAXTON, KNIGHT.
M.P. for Coventry, 1864.

M. Treherne

MORGAN TREHERNE, Esq..
M.P. for Coventry, 1863.

CHAPTER LXXIX.

FIVE CANDIDATES FOR TWO SEATS.

Victoria, continued (1857-8).

Cobden's adverse vote—Carried against Palmerston's Government—Parliament dissolved—Members votes on the China question—Sir Joseph Paxton and the Factory Labour Bill—Mr. T. Mellor, a Palmerstonian, comes forward—Account of him—At the City Hotel—His speech at Corn Exchange—Refuses to withdraw—Mr. R. J. Phillimore, the Liberal-Conservative candidate—At the King's Head—Mr. Morgan Treherne, a candidate—At the George Inn—Biography of Mr. Phillimore—Speeches and bills—Public entry of Mr. Ellice—Arrangements for polling—"The colours of Morgan Treherne"—Nomination, and incidents thereat—Election—Result—"True Blue and all of you"—Return of Messrs. Ellice and Paxton—Mr. Justice Wills's story of the election—Russian guns—The Queen's visit.

LORD PALMERSTON, beaten on the China question, dissolved Parliament 21st March, 1857. Mr. Ellice voted with the Government, and Sir Joseph against; their election addresses gave their reasons; and Paxton explained his absence on the division upon Cobbett's "Regulation of Factory Labour Bill."

In opposition to Sir Joseph came Mr. John Mellor, Q.C., of the Midland Circuit, who, all his "life-time a supporter of Liberal principles," entirely approved of Lord Palmerston's conduct. Mr. Mellor was the son of Mr. John Mellor, of Leicester, and was born in 1809. In 1832 he was called to the Bar, and went on the Midland Circuit, becoming a Q.C. in 1851; he was chosen Recorder of Warwick in 1849, and of Leicester in 1855. He unsuccessfully contested Warwick in 1852, and Coventry in 1857, but was returned for Yarmouth on the 10th August following. Nottingham chose him for its Member on the 28th April, 1859, but he resigned in December, 1861, on being appointed a Puisne Judge of Queen's Bench. In 1862 he was created a Knight, and resigned the Judgeship in 1879. Mr. Mellor had his committee room at the City Hotel, and gave addresses at the Corn Exchange, but, says a Freeman, "as he promised nothing more than Sir Joseph had already performed, the meeting was not a very amiable one with the party." He favoured the ballot, extended suffrage, and Church rates abolition. With two Palmerstonians and one otherwise, the Liberals were disorganized; and when asked, Mr. Mellor refused to withdraw.

Mr. Robert Joseph Phillimore issued an address in "the Liberal-Conservative interest," from "5, Arlington Street, London;" took quarters at the King's Head, and

was supported by the leading Conservatives. Simultaneously, Mr. Morgan Treherne, who as Mr. Morgan Thomas had last contested Coventry in 1837, appeared, but ousted from the King's Head, he made his house the George Inn, Little Park Street.

Some twenty years before, Mr. Ellice had been reported to have declared that as long as Mr. Treherne lived, he should never represent Coventry; and that gentleman, in reply, had said that whenever Mr. Ellice came to the City, he would oppose him, if asked to do so. This asking had been long delayed, and "the Coventry Standard" declared that it now came from a quarter where no friendship was the prompter. Mr. Phillimore made a good impression, and a "Whig-Radical Philosopher" had induced Mr. Treherne to come forward to create a division with that gentleman's friends, on Mr. Mellor's refusing to resign, and thus endeavour to save a seat for Sir Joseph.

Mr. Phillimore was the son of Joseph Phillimore, Esq., D.C.L. He was born in 1810, educated at Westminster and at Christ Church, Oxford, called to the Bar in 1841, became a Q.C. in 1858, and was engaged in the chief cases coming before the Admiralty, Probate, and Divorce Courts. Tavistock chose him a Member in 1853. He was Advocate-General in 1862-7, and subsequently became Judge of the Admiralty Court, Judge of the Arches, Judge of the Cinque Ports; Judge Advocate-General from 1871-3, Master of Faculties 1873; Chancellor of Oxford, Salisbury, and Chichester Dioceses; created a Baronet in 1866, and died in 1885.

The candidates speeches were at this time fully reported. Many handbills followed; one bids the Electors beware of sending lawyers to Parliament, as they "must either neglect their own interests or that of their constituents;" and a second one declares that "Sir Joseph Paxton was created a Knight of St. Wladimer by the Emperor of Russia in 1844. Only think of Coventry being represented by a Russian Knight!"

Mr. Ellice was escorted from the Railway Station on the 21st by a considerable crowd to the Craven Arms. He declared that although he and Sir Joseph had differed and given opposite votes, he believed his colleague acted with honesty and conviction. Gradually, as the election advanced, the Elliceites and Paxtonites joined issue.

The writs arrived on Sunday. The nomination was fixed for Thursday, and the polling for Friday. A Tory scribe sings as follows, to the tune of "Bonny Dundee"—

"To the Freeman of Coventry 'twas Treherne who spoke—
Ere the Tories are beat there are crowns to be broke!
So here's to the man who freedom would earn,
Let him follow the colours of Morgan Treherne.
Then fill up a bumper, and let it go round,
Well thrash these Radicals down to the ground;
So here's to the lad whom freedom would earn,
And follow the colours of Morgan Treherne."

At the nomination, "the old Spon Street Blues and jolly dyers" were conspicuous. Mr. Ellice's proposer and seconder were Aldermen Banbury and Caldicott; Sir Joseph

Paxton's, Messrs. J. S. Whitem and W. H. Gardner ; Mr. Treherne's, Messrs. G. Copley and G. Hands ; Mr. Mellor's, Messrs. A. K. Dunn and I. Newsome ; and Mr. Phillimore's, Messrs. R. K. Rotherham and W. Lynes. The Mayor, Mr. Henry Browett, declared the show of hands was in favour of Messrs. Ellice and Paxton. Speeches were delivered by the candidates. Mr. Treherne spoke of his past connection, and said "that twenty years had passed away since he had had the pleasure of seeing their good faces and of addressing their intelligent ears. He was now deserted by those who had always supported him—he did not know why—and had been refused admission to the King's Head." He then asked Mr. Ellice to detract his denunciation against him, but the Right Hon. gentleman emphatically denied having uttered one, and Mr. Treherne accepted the denial. Assailing "the broadcloth" of the Tory party for deserting him, and holding up his presentation watch from Messrs. Vale and Rotherham, he said : "It was a good watch ; he valued it highly, though it cost him dearly, for it kept better time than its presenters of 1837 had kept faith with him."

The election day was a quiet one. Mr. Phillimore, finding Mr. Treherne had disorganized his supporters, withdrew, and Mr. Mellor followed. The result of the poll being—

| | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|------|---------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| The Right Hon. Edward Ellice... | 2810 | Mr. John Mellor | ... | ... | 703 |
| Sir Joseph Paxton | ... | Mr. Morgan Treherne | ... | ... | 599 |
| Mr. Robert Phillimore | 2384 | ... | ... | 356 | |

Mr. Ellice addressed the Electors from the Craven Arms after the election, and in thanking the assembly for his great majority, finished by proposing "True Blue and all of you." He then joined Sir Joseph at the Castle Hotel, and the new Members,

MESSRS. ELLICE AND PAXTON,

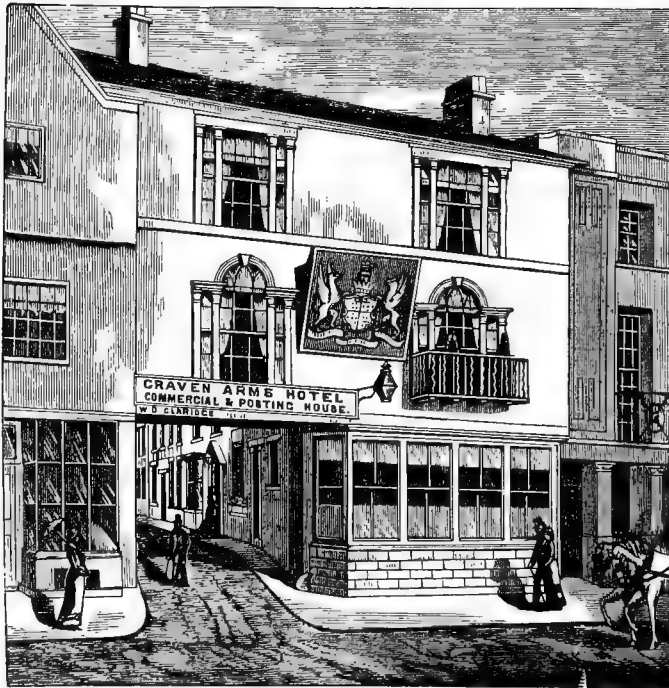
perambulated the Town.

Mr. Justice Wills, relating his experience of this election at Birmingham in 1888, said—

"My solitary attempt in connection with politics was made a great many years ago, when I went to Coventry to assist in the unsuccessful candidature of a very dear and intimate friend, Sir John Mellor, who was so many years Mr. Justice Mellor. I passed several miserable days sitting in a three-pair back room of a public-house, keeping canvass books, recording what was going on, and occasionally receiving deputations, which never came unless something was going wrong. Two or three days before the election I heard the regular 'clumpety clump' up those three-pair back stairs, and knew that something was amiss. I waited with curiosity until half-a-dozen gentlemen—they were, of course, all gentlemen on those occasions—walked into the room, and I asked them very politely, 'What is it, gentlemen, that you wish for?' The deputation explained, 'We have heard that your man does not intend to give us our ancient rights.' Astonished, I replied, 'Ancient rights! What nonsense! There was never such a man for rights as my candidate! If you send him to Parliament, he will be the right man in the right place, and it will be all right.' The deputation said they meant business, and did not want any chaff of that kind, so I said, 'What is it then that you want?' They replied, 'Why we represent the outvoters ; we never have voted without a guinea a head, and, what is more, we don't mean to either this time.' I explained that I could not manage it, as my instructions were very peremptory, and that besides, since the last election, there had been a terrible Act of Parliament passed which called

that sort of thing bribery, and added that 'the deputation might be sent to gaol, and that I should, if anything was discovered.' Well, they said 'that as far as they were concerned, they would chance it, and that as far as I was personally concerned, they did not care a straw if I passed the whole remainder of my natural life in prison.' That, gentlemen, was my first introduction to active politics, and it was also my last experience of them."

Mr. Ellice procured two of the Russian guns for Coventry. On 14th June, 1858, the Queen came to Coventry Station, upon a visit to Lord Leigh, at Stoneleigh, and the Mayor, Mr. C. Dresser, presented Her Majesty with an address of welcome.



THE CRAVEN ARMS HOTEL, COVENTRY.

For many years the Head-quarters of the RT. HON. EDWARD ELLICE, M.P.

CHAPTER LXXX.

THE NEW REFORM AGITATION.

Victoria, continued (1858 to 1859).

Lord Derby's Conservative Ministry—Rejection of Mr. Disraeli's Reform Bill—Dissolution of Parliament, and its issue—Mr. Ellice's views on the new Reform Bill—Mr. Morgan Treherne and his address—The address of Mr. Charles Griffin—Its peculiarities—His speech at the White Lion Inn—He is not nominated—Mr. Treherne's address from the King's Head—Declares for a £6 borough franchise—The mob retorts—Sir Joseph Paxton's speech from the Castle Hotel—Mr. Ellice's indisposition—His son, Mr. Edward Ellice, Member for St. Andrew's, represents him—Sir Joseph Paxton and the Wyken Colliery—The nomination—The colliers strike—A retort on Mr. Treherne—Polling day—Messrs. Ellice and Paxton again returned—Result of the election—Lord Palmerston's new Administration.



HE Palmerston Cabinet ended in 1858, and Earl Derby formed a Conservative Administration. Mr. Disraeli introduced a Reform Bill to the Commons, on which the Government was defeated. Parliament was dissolved on the 23rd April, 1859, and a General Election followed, the question at issue being the merits of the rejected measure and the principles for framing a new Bill.

Mr. Ellice, suffering from his old complaint, the gout, in an address promised to promote a liberal and comprehensive measure, extending representation in counties and boroughs, and giving to every class their just rights and franchises.

Mr. Morgan Treherne came forward ; acknowledging in his address that the late measure had its faults, he considered they might have been corrected, and that progress could not be advanced by the peremptory rejection of the Bill.

The late Members were again threatened with opposition from their own ranks, but the "gentlemen of liberal and commercial principles" did not put in an appearance. Mr. Charles Griffin, a local and eccentric lawyer, of Leamington, however, issued an address from the White Lion Inn. Mr. Griffin had interested himself in the Leigh peerage, and other notorious cases, and his advent at Coventry is thus told—

" Mr. Griffin, in desiring to be returned an M.P., alludes to his conviction for libel before Mr. Justice Wilde, and says, ' If you want to know the stuff I'm made of, think of my four days trial, without Counsel or Attorney ; my two speeches of three hours each (never fairly reported), and my two years in the cells at Warwick Gaol. . . . I am for as much Reform as Mr. Treherne, and a great deal more. I am for controlling the Norman Banditti power that, under William the Bastard Conqueror, stole all our Saxon acres 800 years ago, and whose successors still retain most of them ; that is, our upper 10,000 (the Lords inclusive), who, with all the latter importations, are as Norman as ever. I am for the conquered Saxon reclaiming his right to govern himself. . . .

I think if anyone is to go without a vote, it should be the useless idlers—the Lord, the Flunkey, the Thief, the Rotund, the Bishop, and all the other aristocrats who feed on the Saxon Rank and Wealth. The British Government, as hitherto constituted, is the Key-stone of European Tyranny. The Freedom of the World is the shuttlecock of the Derby-Palmerston-Russell battledore players.' Mr. Griffin's speech was short, but erratic, and hidden behind the plaster figure of the Leonie beast, he was barely seen. One of the crowd cried, 'Get across the lion, Griffin, and let's look at you.' He was never nominated."

In consequence of bad weather, a meeting of Mr. Treherne's friends on the Green, was adjourned to the King's Head, where, in an able speech, he declared he would vote for a £10 franchise in the counties and £6 in the boroughs. He explained his views upon passing events, and at times was interrupted by some unruly persons indulging in "the recreation of Jeffreys and Barlowing," and by cries of "No Paxton!" "Do hold your tongue about Paxton," said he; whereto one of the crowd responded, "Bury him in a coal-pit," and another, "No, put him in the cemetery;" the first being in allusion to Sir Joseph's supposed connection with Wyken colliery, whose miners were on strike, the second with his planning Coventry's new burying place.

Sir Joseph Paxton addressed the Electors from the Castle Hotel, and explained his views upon the Reform Bill. Mr. Ellice, attacked by his old enemy the gout, was prevented from coming to Coventry, and his son, Mr. Edward Ellice, junr., Member for St. Andrew's burghs, made an address for him from the Craven Arms. His utterances were able and liberal, and his speech chiefly had reference to the Reform Bill.

Sir Joseph's connection with Wyken Colliery, although not clearly understood, excited an amount of paper warfare at this election. At the nomination on the 29th, the three candidates were named. Hundreds of colliers, who were out on strike, came to the City, and helped to enliven the scene. A Radical bill says of Mr. Treherne: "On the 10th December, 1832, he attempted to overhaul you by drunken navvies. To-day he hires a mob of colliers to carry the nomination;" an insinuation unwarranted.

The poll took place on the 30th of April. The Conservatives had an indifferent organization, and about 700 split their votes between Ellice and Treherne. The polling ended—

| | | | |
|------------------------------|-----|-----|------|
| The Right Hon. Edward Ellice | ... | ... | 3107 |
| Sir Joseph Paxton | ... | ... | 2409 |
| Mr. Morgan Treherne | ... | ... | 1928 |

MESSRS. ELLICE AND PAXTON

were returned. Out of a total of 5,571 voters on the register, 4,438 polled.

The elections went against Lord Derby, and he resigned in June, when Lord Palmerston formed a Liberal Administration.



CHAPTER LXXXI.

LAMMAS AND MICHAELMAS LANDS INCLOSURE ; THE FRENCH TREATY,
THE STRIKE, AND THE SILK INDUSTRY.

Victoria, continued (1859 to 1862).

Removal of the fair—Lammas lands Inclosure, 1860—Bad trade and distress at Coventry—The French Treaty—Announcement through a foreign paper—Correspondence between the Mayor and Mr. Ellice—Announcement of the Treaty—How received at Coventry—Actions of the Members—Sir Joseph Paxton's speech on the Treaty—Mr. Newdegate's motion—Difference of the Members—The strike—Comes to an end—Trade depression—Bad times—And distress—The relief fund—Efforts to start new trades—The Tories blame the Treaty for the bad state of trade—The Liberals lay it to other causes—Mr. Newdegate and the Belgium Treaty—His statements as to Coventry—Lord Palmerston's defence—"Vicissitudes of taste"—Office of Superintendent of Police—Mr. John Norris appointed—New Public Offices erected—Distress of 1862-3—Two relief funds—Sir Joseph Paxton on new trades and better Railway accommodation—Prince of Wales's marriage celebration.

THE Freemen were exceedingly tenacious of their rights in 1858, and opposed the Mayor and City Council in their endeavour to remove the great fair from Greyfriars Green to Gosford Green, and at length it became located in the Pool Meadow.

Under the award of 1860, the inclosure of the Michaelmas and Lammas lands, consisting of 974a. 3r. 16p., held by sixty to seventy different proprietors, took place, and, as the grounds were subject to the Freemen's herbage rights before spoken of, rather more than 273 acres, were awarded by the Inclosure Commissioners to the Freemen of Coventry, in compensation thereof. The annual proceeds (after paying the outgoings) have ever since been granted half-yearly by the Freemen for seniority purposes, *i.e.*, to pay as many of the oldest Freemen, and Freemen's widows, such sums weekly as the income allows.

The years 1860, 1861, and 1862 were black ones for Coventry, as bad trade and great distress prevailed. Out of a population of about 41,000, the greater part was dependent upon the ribbon trade, whilst in the City and neighbourhood there were some 40,000 persons connected with it. A foreign paper, the "*Independance Belge*," announced that negotiations for a French Treaty were in progress between the two countries, and towards January, 1860, the Mayor of Coventry wrote to Mr. Ellice to ascertain if there was any truth in the report. It had been kept so complete a secret that the Member replied: "I do not believe there is the slightest reason to suppose

that a Treaty of the character you have represented to me, is on the point of being contracted between this country and France."

Early in February following, however, Mr. Gladstone, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, announced to the House that the Government had ratified a Commercial Treaty with France. The announcement came as a surprise to Coventry. It produced a panic amongst the ribbon manufacturers, and gave the Members for the City anxious moments. Sir Joseph Paxton, on 15th December, 1863, stated—

"At the approach of the possibility of our admitting into this country a large quantity of French ribbons, free of duty, a deputation of the masters came to London to see my late colleague and myself. They felt that the time was gone by when they could ask to have the duty continued; but what they did ask, and what they had a right to ask, was that English goods be admitted into France on the same terms as French ribbons are introduced into this country. I think they had a right to ask that, and an effort was made by my late lamented colleague and myself with the Government, and particularly with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, on their behalf; and we had reason to believe that the Chamber of Commerce at St. Etienne had also memorialised the Government that English ribbons ought to be imported into France the same as ribbons now are imported into this country. We believed that would have been carried. It turned out, however, that the Treaty arrangements had gone so far that we were not enabled to accomplish that object."

Sir Joseph asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer several questions with regard to silk, and in a speech said—

"The silk manufacturers at Coventry had been for some time in a depressed condition, and when the intelligence of the conclusion of the Treaty arrived, the effect was completely to paralyze the trade. As soon as the announcement was made, the Mayor of Coventry and a deputation of the inhabitants waited on him and his colleague, and the Mayor said that he could hardly be answerable for the safety of his City if the duty were taken off. He did not altogether concur in the dismal forebodings of the Mayor; but still, the change would undoubtedly strike a great blow at the prosperity of the Town he represented, and that blow was the more felt, that it was believed that the object of the remission of the duty was not to render silk cheaper, but to give an impetus to the French manufacture. Nor must the Committee suppose that Coventry was a place which had not progressed with the times. In 1821 the population of Coventry was 21,000; in 1859 it was 42,000. In 1840 there were in it 18,000 persons employed in the silk trade; in 1860 there were 28,000. In 1840 there were 4,732 small hand-loom; at the present time there were only 500; but of steam-power looms there were 6,050; and while in the former year the production of silk ribbons was 795,000 yards per week, it was now no less than 2,300,000 yards per week. The tax on silk had never been considered a burdensome one, but to be, in fact, a tax upon luxury; and even the Liverpool Financial Reform Association, in whose steps the Chancellor of the Exchequer seemed to be treading, had declared that so long as customs duties were levied at all, the duty on silk ought to be retained. The tax was 15 per cent. He complained that while the Chancellor of the Exchequer had sought to conciliate the wine and spirit merchants in the matter of drawback, not the smallest accommodation had been given to his constituents. At present their trade was protected by a duty of about 16 per cent.; and if 8 per cent. of that duty had been remitted now, and the remaining 8 per cent. some seven or eight years hence, they might have been able to sustain the shock; but what they most complained of was, that they had been bartered away for a French Treaty, without the prospect of receiving any compensation whatever. He himself was a Free Trader, as were also his constituents; and they were prepared to give up the silk duty if an arrangement could be made by which their productions could be admitted into France upon the same terms as those of France would be admitted into this country. But the fact was, the French prohibited the export of dyed silks, and the people of Coventry were thus prevented from competing with them in the finer articles, which were principally made of French dyed silk."

Mr. Newdegate, the Member for North Warwickshire, proposed an adjournment until October, 1861, and Mr. Ellice replied. Sir Joseph differed somewhat from his colleague. Mr. Ellice was for the immediate removal of the duty upon foreign ribbons, and Paxton for staying a portion of it for some years.

The "Cobden Treaty" came into force ; the duties on silk goods imported into England were abolished on 4th March. In dread of coming events, a panic seized the Coventry silk trade, and on 6th July the ribbon masters at Coventry published a hand-bill stating they could no longer pay the list price for making ribbons, and, as has lately been told in a pleasing and interesting volume, containing considerable matter of local moment of these times,* "the weavers in a body resisted, and the struggle culminated in the terrible strike and lock-out of 1860." But after about eight weeks a partial agreement was come to, although things remained long unsettled and work scarce. The watchmakers suffered considerably. Trade was in a greatly depressed condition, and a subscription fund was set going to relieve the distress. Thousands were out of employ, homes broken up, and artisans reduced to poverty, losing their all, and disposing of looms and household property at the greatest sacrifice. Many sought relief from the Parochial Authorities, who set them to work levelling the commons about the City. Others tramped to various districts, or emigrated abroad.

The relief fund reached the large sum of £42,088. It was generously subscribed throughout the country, and included £150 from the Queen, £125 from the Prince of Wales, £100 from each of the Members, and a collection made by Mr. H. W. Eaton, silk broker, amongst his friends of upwards of £3,000.

Meanwhile, busy minds were endeavouring to introduce new trades, and the Freeman's Trustees generously met a proposal for granting a large close of land northward of the City, at an ordinary rental, whereon a Company built a mill for the manufacture of cotton goods. Great efforts were made by the Rev. S. H. Widdrington, Lord Leigh, and many others to alleviate the distress. The Leigh Mills, under the name of the "North Warwickshire Worsted and Woollen Spinning and Weaving Company, Limited," followed in 1863. Mr. F. A. Skidmore's renowned Art Metal Works had been started in 1850 ; whilst at the Exhibitions of 1851 and 1862, Coventry productions were represented. Excellent portrait ribbons of Mr. Ellice, Mr. Treherne, and other celebrities were brought out by various manufacturers, and book-markers followed. Elastic weaving was introduced ; trimmings, fringes, cambric frillings, etc., were made, and a Company commenced to manufacture sewing machines. A new School of Design was built in 1862, Mr. Samuel Carter laying the chief stone on 18th August.

From a Coventry Tory point of view, the French Treaty was mainly responsible for the stagnation of the weaving trade and the glut of the markets by foreign productions. They used the Treaty as a party cry against the existing Government. The Liberals contended that there were divers causes for the depression, one of the chief of which was that a change of fashion had set in during 1859, before the Treaty

* "Lights and Shadows in the Life of an Artisan," by Joseph Gutteridge, ribbon weaver.—Coventry, Curtis & Beamish, 1893.

was broached, and that its effects were felt through 1860, but in 1861 there was some improvement, and ribbon trimmings for dresses and bonnets began again to be used. In February, 1862, Mr. Newdegate spoke in the House of Commons upon the question of a Commercial Treaty with Belgium. He said—

"He hoped that, if there were to be more Commercial Treaties, the interests of British manufacturers would be better secured than they were in that of the French Treaty, which had caused a frightful amount of distress amongst the ribbon weavers of Coventry. For two years 32,000 persons in that district had to subsist upon the benevolence of the public, and 14,000 were still dependent upon charity; 50 out of 80 of the manufacturers had gone into 'the Gazette,' and that number did not include those who had made compositions with their creditors. Two thousand houses were to let in Coventry, and the deposits drawn from the Savings Bank in two years was £17,000. It was true that the ribbon trade had been depressed on the Rhine and Switzerland, but still, much of the suffering in the country was caused by the operation of the Treaty, and things had been made worse by the loss of the American trade, occasioned by the war there."

Lord Palmerston, in defending his Ministers actions, replied: "I can assure my friend that blindness towards, or neglect of, the commercial interests of the country is not a fault which Her Majesty's Government have ever fallen into. The Hon. Member lamented the fate of the Coventry weavers, and ascribed their distress to the French Treaty. I believe my friend is entirely mistaken as to the cause of that distress. It has not arisen from the French Treaty—not from an inundation of French ribbons—but from a change of fashion and fancies in this country. The manufacturers are in one respect in the condition that is described in a well-known prologue—

"Hard is the fate who, here by fortune placed,
Must watch the wild vicissitudes of taste."

These vicissitudes from time to time lead either to an increased demand for peculiar manufactures or to a cessation thereof. The ladies; who exercise so great a sway in all human affairs; may, by changing their style of dress, inflict distress upon one set of manufacturers or give abundant occupation to others, and the Coventry ribbon weavers are now suffering from an absence of ribbons upon their dresses."

In December, 1861, the office of Superintendent of the Coventry Police became vacant, and Mr. T. H. Prosser, the late Chief, temporarily took over Mr. Skermer's duties; but on 18th March, 1862, Mr. John Norris, Inspector of Police at Bath, was appointed. After the pulling down of the "Half Moon" property and the formation of St. Mary's Street, the new Public Offices (including police buildings) were erected in 1862; and under Mr. Norris's able management, the force was greatly improved.

As the winter of 1862 approached, the distress amongst the people became painfully apparent, and in November two separate relief funds were started. To that for Coventry about £3,700 was subscribed; the North Warwickshire relief fund reached £4,900. Sir Joseph Paxton looked at the ribbon trade, which had depressed the City on several occasions, as not to be permanently depended upon, and recommended the wealthier citizens to introduce more varied and profitable trades, so that the place might not be dependent upon ribbons and watches alone, and suggested better railway accommodation as one remedy for continued depression.

The marriage of the Prince of Wales with the Princess Alexandra of Denmark, on the 10th March, 1863, was celebrated with considerable rejoicings at Coventry, and a thousand aged persons were entertained at dinner in a large tent erected in Broadgate.

CHAPTER LXXXII.

TRIUMPHANT RETURN OF AN OLD CONSERVATIVE.

Victoria, continued (1863).

The death of Mr. Ellice—Sympathy at Coventry—The funeral—A by-election—Mr. M. Treherne declares himself a candidate—As does Mr. H. W. Eaton and Mr. A. W. Peel—Their addresses and views—Biography of Mr. Peel—He creates a good impression—Mr. Treherne refuses to give way—"Whom will ye choose?"—Mr. Treherne's arrival and rally—Mr. Eaton conditionally retires—A long-remembered speech—Mr. Peel's addresses—Damage at the William IV.—The day of nomination—Party cries and scenes thereat—Show of hands in favour of Mr. Treherne—The polling day—Conservative hourly majorities—Description by "the Coventry Times"—Mr. M. Treherne returned—Speeches—Chairing procession—"£50 Reward"—Mr. Treherne's lost watch.



EARLY in 1863, a Birmingham paper announced that Mr. Ellice would retire from public life with the close of the existing Parliament, as his health and age demanded it. He presided at a dinner to celebrate the completion of the Northern Railways on the 10th September, and went to the house at Ardochy on the Glengarry estate, hoping that the salubrious air of the district would benefit him. Feeling slightly indisposed, he retired to bed on the evening of the 16th, where the next morning he was found dead. The people of Coventry were startled at the news, and doubts were at first entertained as to the truth of the report, but later news confirmed it; and on the Saturday night following, muffled peals sounded dolefully from the Church towers of the City. The funeral of Mr. Ellice took place on the 23rd, the place of interment being a well-wooded knoll at the Western extremity of Loch Garry, on the farm of Greenfield, about a mile from Ardochy, called "Torr-na-Cairidh," to which the deceased used occasionally to repair in order to admire the varied and magnificent scenery. This eminence had been selected by the late proprietor of Glengarry, Earl Dudley, for the site of a hunting lodge, and he had a space on its crest levelled and prepared for the contemplated erection, with a road formed to its summit; up which Mr. Edward Ellice, M.P., son and heir of the deceased, and other mourners walked. The bier, with its burden, being of great weight, was borne by twelve stalwart Highlanders, and the mortal remains of the Statesman were buried in the new cemetery on the crest of the Torr, amidst delightful and romantic scenery.

Mr. Morgan Treherne promptly wired from Geneva, expressing a hope that the vacancy would be filled up by the choice "of a very old acquaintance," and the

addresses of Mr. Henry William Eaton and Mr. Arthur Wellesley Peel simultaneously appeared. Mr. Eaton alluded to his extensive connection with the City's staple trade, and whilst declaring that his opinions were "free and independent," favoured all reasonable measures for the education and welfare of the working classes; but, whilst concurring in any well-digested measure for a wider extension of the suffrage, he was no friend to the ballot. Attached to the Church of England, he was not indifferent to the scruples of those who conscientiously differed therefrom. He deplored the fatal effect which the recent Commercial Treaty had had upon the staple trades of the City, and the want and misery it had produced. Although impossible to procure a revocation thereof, he should deem it his first duty to promote the establishment of additional trades at Coventry, in order to afford remunerative employment. Mr. Peel sought to enter Parliament as a member of "the great Liberal party," and as a supporter of Lord Palmerston's Government. He was in favour of economy in public expenditure, but not to such an extent as to impair the efficiency of the Army and Navy. Any well-considered measure of Reform would have his co-operation. He was a member of the Established Church, but supported the furtherance of religious liberty. He would maintain the interests of the Freemen, and also endeavour to promote the introduction of new, and the development of existing, trades.

Mr. A. W. Peel was a son of the Right Honourable Sir Robert Peel, and was born on the 6th August, 1829. Educated at Eton, and Balliol College, Oxford, he married, in 1862, Adelaide, daughter of W. S. Dugdale, Esq., of Merevale. He had taken up his quarters at the Craven Arms, where, with the Hon. E. C. Leigh and Mr. A. H. Pears, he spoke to the Electors from the balcony, and, for "a speaker who had never before addressed the public in his life," made a good impression in an entertaining speech.

Mr. Treherne would not give way, and it looked as if there would be three candidates in the field. "Whom will ye choose?" asks a local poet, and, alluding to the part taken by the late Sir Robert Peel in the repeal of the Corn Laws, lets his muse run thus—

"The blow has fallen, the link is snapped,
Our grand old veteran's dead;
Whom shall the ancient City choose
To stand up in his stead?
Morgan, that much-rejected man,
Who sighs her heart to steal;
Eaton, the free and easy;
Or *Arthur Wellesley Peel*?

Ye poor who taste the bounty
Of the *father* at each meal,
See what the *son* is made of—
Try *Arthur Wellesley Peel*.
If happy healthy children
Around you cling and play,
'Tis *Peel* to whom you owe it—
He took the tax away."

Mr. Morgan Treherne arrived at the Coventry Station from London on Thursday afternoon, and was met by a vast crowd of his supporters ; when, headed by a brass band playing "Jefferys and Barlow," he was brought in a carriage through the principal streets, and addressed about 10,000 persons from the King's Head balcony. Mr. Eaton then withdrew from the contest, on the understanding that he would again offer himself at the next General Election. The Commercial Treaty with France of 1860, and the collapse of the English silk trade, had told upon the Electors ; numbers of the "old Blues," "prejudiced against the Liberal Government, became Conservative ; and now, Mr. Ellice was dead, gave their votes to Mr. Treherne out of sympathy ; at the same time admiring his courage in coming forward." That gentleman made speeches upon the subject of the Treaty and other affecting topics, and, not satisfied with doing so, issued "postscripts" to them. In an often-remembered speech, he expressed his "*thorough and hearty detestation of the Whigs, for 'everybody and everything about him appeared to hate Whiggery.'* He had a parrot at home that cried, '*D—n the Whigs!*' and although he should be very sorry to use such language himself—even if he did express himself strongly sometimes—he could not say that his feelings towards the Whigs were more friendly than those of his parrot ;" which outspoken sally caused much amusement at the time, and was afterwards used by opponents to his detriment in a cartoon.

Mr. Peel spoke on various occasions upon many topics. He would not promise to vote for the abolition of the Church rates under Mr. Trelawney's Bill, without first seeing it. Whilst speaking at the William IV. public-house, in Spon Street, an opposition mob smashed the windows, and he had some difficulty in leaving.

At the nomination on Wednesday the excitement reached a high pitch, and the centre of the City was crowded. Cries of "Morgan for ever, with Peel in the river !" and *vice versâ*, resounded on all sides. The hustings was at the Smithford Street end of Broadgate. The candidates and their friends met, and the usual rough amusements set in. "Hats were thrown in the air," "whilst ever and anon duels were fought with nature's weapons, and only ceased when the friends of the man likely to get beat pushed their comrade behind them, or out of reach of his adversary's blows." The Tory mob began to jostle, push, and hoot, and, by superior numbers, drove their opponents from the front of the booth, wherein the Mayor, Mr. T. Soden, and the Town Clerk, Mr. T. Browett, with the candidates and their supporters, went through the usual formalities. Mr. Peel's nominators were Messrs. A. H. Pears and T. Read, and Mr. Treherne's, Dr. Edward Phillips and Mr. Arthur Gutteridge. A show of hands was taken, and "both candidates got a fine exhibition of dirty fingers, but Mr. Treherne had a great number of wedding rings," and the exhibit being declared in his favour, a poll was demanded for Mr. Peel.

On Thursday, the 8th October, as early as five o'clock, Mr. Treherne's party got to work, feeling that "now or never" their man must triumph. The shops were shut up

in the principal streets to prevent damage, and by ten the Tory candidate headed the poll by above 300. Although the Liberals tried hard to reverse matters, Mr. Treherne's majority remained at over 100 throughout the day. The Conservatives were very sure of victory, and an eye-witness records: "So great was the joy of the Tory party, that men who had hitherto been as 'staid as Quakers' actually leapt with delight, and the Butcher Row, a very hot-bed of Conservatism, was made the scene of a most remarkable description; men and women congregated there—all appeared to be struck with St. Vitus's dance, and seemed more like lunatics escaped from Bedlam than sane creatures." At ten o'clock the numbers were: Treherne 1,354, Peel 1,004; at twelve: Treherne 1,920, Peel 1,664; at two: Treherne 2,102, Peel 1,911. At five, the Mayor announced the close of the poll from the hustings as follows—

| | | | | |
|---------------------------|-----|-----|-----|------------|
| Mr. Morgan Treherne | ... | ... | ... | 2263 |
| Mr. Arthur Wellesley Peel | ... | ... | ... | 2129 |
| Majority for Mr. Treherne | ... | ... | ... | <u>134</u> |

MR. MORGAN TREHERNE,

thus, thirty years after his first contest, became Member for Coventry; and from the highest chimney of the City Hotel, a sweep announced, "All's up, Morgan's in!" Mr. Treherne and Mr. Peel thanked the Electors from their head-quarters; the former was delighted with his conquest, but the audience were impatient for a procession; and, preceded by a brass band, the Member was drawn in a carriage through the Town; the Radical newspaper remarking: "The beer, which had been flowing freely during the day, was now plentifully indulged in at the various public-houses, but a steady fall of rain coming during the night, acted as a special constable by keeping the streets clear." Meanwhile, the following announcement was made by the Tories—

"£50 REWARD.

The above reward will be paid to any person who can produce 'THE GREAT LIBERAL PARTY,' last heard of in Coventry at four o'clock on Thursday, October 8th, 1863. Application to be made to
SERGEANT GLOOM."

In a rally at this time Mr. Treherne lost a gold watch, but not the presentation one of 1837. His opponents satirically said it was "a Geneva watch, worn by its owner as an example of his desire to promote the interests of the Coventry watch-makers," and made much ado about the circumstance, but the watch was eventually recovered.



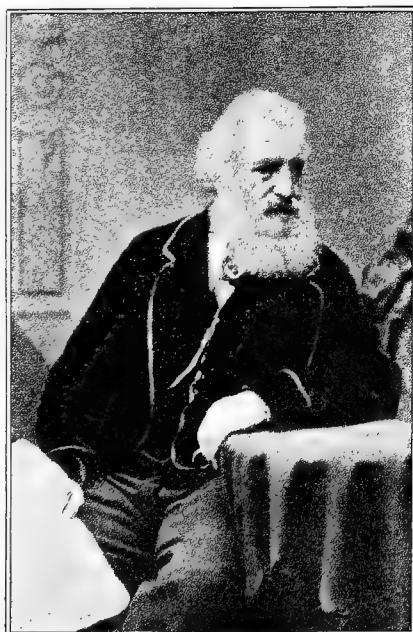


ARTHUR WELLESLEY PEEL, Esq., M.P.
(SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS).
Parliamentary Candidate for Coventry, 1863.

(From a Photograph by Mr. R. L. Graham, 6 The Parade, Leamington.)



THOMAS COURTENAY THEYDON WARNER, Esq.,
Parliamentary Candidate for Coventry, 1865.
(From a Photograph by Mr. E. Smith, 3 Cheapside, E.C.)



EDWARD FORDHAM FLOWER, Esq.,
Parliamentary Candidate for Coventry, 1865.

(From a Photograph by Mr. R. W. Thrupp, Birmingham.)



WILLIAM BUSFIELD FERRAND, Esq.,
Parliamentary Candidate for Coventry, 1867.

(From a Photograph by Mr. R. V. Green, Coventry.)

CHAPTER LXXXIII.

ANOTHER BY-ELECTION : A SECOND TORY GAIN.

Victoria, continued (1864 to 1865).

Mr. Peel's retirement—Subsequent biography—Sir Joseph Paxton's proposed withdrawal—The addresses of Mr. Osborne Stock, Mr. H. W. Eaton, and Mr. Mason Jones—Account of the latter—His introduction—Mr. C. Griffin's address—Death of Sir Joseph Paxton—Incidents of his life—An unexpected contest—Mr. Eaton and Mr. Jones come forward—Arrival of the writs—Speeches of Mr. Jones—Entry of Messrs. Treherne and Eaton—Mr. A. S. Hill's first appearance—Political bills—A cartoon—Preparing for the nomination—"No French barricades"—An incident—Proceedings at the hustings—Mr. Eaton has the show of hands—Day of election—Result of the polling—Mr. H. W. Eaton returned—His biography.



R. A. W. PEEL remained the acknowledged Liberal candidate for Coventry until he issued his "formal farewell" to the constituency on 16th March, 1865; but, on the 13th July following, was chosen for Warwick, and subsequently re-elected for Warwick and Leamington. He was Parliamentary Secretary of the Poor Law Board from December, 1868, to January, 1871, when he became Secretary of the Board of Trade, which office he held until August, 1873, and was then appointed Patronage Secretary to the Treasury. On Mr. Gladstone's return to power in 1880, Mr. Peel accepted the Under-Secretaryship of the Home Department. When Mr. Bland was raised to the Peerage in 1884, Mr. Peel succeeded him as Speaker on 19th May, and made an exceedingly dignified speech when entering upon the position.

In April, Sir Joseph Paxton intimated that, on account of ill-health, he did not intend to seek re-election, and the Liberals appealed to various gentlemen to become their candidates at the next General Election; and on 5th May, Mr. Osborne Stock, of "16, Cavendish Square, London," issued an address supporting Liberal measures. At the same time, that of Mr. H. W. Eaton, of "16, Princes Gate, Hyde Park," appeared, who, having received a requisition signed by 2,073 Freemen and Electors, desiring his nomination as a second Conservative candidate, was prepared to come forward.

Mr. Thomas Mason Jones also issued an address, dated from "6, Pembridge Gardens, Bayswater," on 1st June. He was in favour of substantial reform, redistribution of electoral power, and the ballot; whilst supporting Free Trade, he was opposed to Church rates, and the laws of primogeniture and entail. The Conservative paper

promptly bracketed Mr. Jones and Mr. Stock together as opponents; but whether Mr. Stock was too mild a Liberal for Mr. Jones, or Mr. Jones too advanced a Radical for Mr. Stock, they do not appear to have been greatly in harmony. Mr. Mason Jones was of Irish extraction. When 18 years of age, and attending Queen's College, Cork, he stoutly advocated Cobden's view of the Crimean War, and was taken to task in "The Cork Constitution." Having fine oratorical powers and much self-confidence, he became a public lecturer. Going on tour through the United States, he advocated the universal emancipation of slavery; and afterwards continued to lecture in England. He made his *début* in Coventry at "Bird's Hotel," Hertford Street, and addressed a great multitude. Subsequently his head-quarters were at the Craven Arms Hotel.

From Cathcart Villa, Leamington, June 2nd, 1865, Mr. Charles Griffin again issued an address "to the Independent Freemen and Electors," this time as a Free Trader and Reformer, but was not nominated.

The death of Sir Joseph Paxton, on 8th June, 1865, at the age of 62, could scarcely be said to be unlooked for, as he had been ailing some time. After designing the Crystal Palace, he took up the profession of an engineer, and to him Coventry is indebted for its beautiful cemetery. The Duke of Devonshire was much attached to Sir Joseph. Shortly before the failure of Messrs. Strachan Paul and Co.'s bank, Paxton went to him, asking for a loan of £70,000, without stating the object for which he required it, and was granted the apparent favour. A smash quickly followed, and the Duke lamented his losses, but Sir Joseph, having early intelligence of the impending catastrophe, had prevented them by promptly cashing the cheque, and during the morning called upon his noble friend with the £70,000 in Bank of England notes. The Duke died a few years before Paxton, and, a short time prior to his death, handed him a life policy for £20,000. Sir Joseph Paxton was buried in the quiet and rural churchyard of Edensor, in Derbyshire.

With a contest thus precipitated, Mr. Eaton expressed his intention of going to the poll, not as the "free and independent," but as the adopted Conservative candidate. Mr. Mason Jones appeared, and spoke, being the candidate of "the Radical section of the Liberal community, although Mr. Stock's name had been sometime before announced as the candidate adopted by the Whigs."

The writs for the election arrived on the 16th June; the nomination was fixed for Tuesday, the 20th, and the polling the day following.

Mr. Mason Jones used his finest oratory to gain over the Electors upon various occasions. He denied that he was a Chartist, as had been said.

Messrs. Treherne and Eaton arrived at the Coventry Railway Station on Thursday, when a vast concourse of people awaited them, and, taking their seats in a carriage drawn by four greys, proceeded to the King's Head, where they addressed about 8,000 persons,

and made speeches of a Conservative tendency. Mr. Alexander Staveley Hill, a Barrister on the Oxford Circuit, made his first appearance in Coventry at this time.

The window bills contained considerable humour; one headed "Important discovery for the neck—the new choker," said "the article now presented to the Electors is the new neck-tie, or Osborne stock;" another, "The Golden Image," which "King Conservative set up;" others, a Radical take-off, signed "The Baron de Boots;" "Jones, the political fiddler," with a representation of a conjurer "during the fair;" and "Coming! Coming!! Coming!!! Shortly will arrive from London the great Giant Silkbuster;" are amusing; but whilst Mr. Eaton, it is said, "only laughed at them," Mr. Jones, smarting from an alleged libel, promised to make it warm for certain printers. The cartoon of "The coming struggle" had considerable merit.

The hustings, as usual, was erected in Broadgate, ready for the nomination on Tuesday, and late on Monday afternoon a barrier had been erected in front, in order to divide the crowd in the centre. The Tories objected to this as the suggestion of Mr. Mason Jones, and asked for "no French barricades in Coventry;" when at length the objectionable erection was removed by order of the Mayor, to meet their wishes. It was reported that Mr. Jones would not be allowed to go to the hustings for nomination, and at a committee meeting he declared in that case he would do as had been done at the Cooper Institute, New York; adding that "for Americans I have the American Constitution, for Christians the Bible, but for those who are neither Americans or Christians I have these," and to the no small consternation of the committee, he produced a pair of pistols. At the nomination, the space in front of the booth was closely packed by some ten thousand persons. The booth was divided into three compartments. Mr. Mason Jones, surrounded by his friends, was the first to arrive, but many of the recognized Liberal leaders were absent. Presently Mr. Eaton appeared, and "the Tory mob pressed the Jonesites into a thin line on one side; yet, still the latter showed a tolerable minority." On the arrival of the Mayor, Mr. R. H. Minster, and officials, Mr. R. K. Rotherham proposed, and Mr. Isaac Caldicott seconded, Mr. Eaton's nomination; and Mr. B. Hickling proposed, and Mr. L. Booth seconded, that of Mr. Jones. The show of hands preponderated for the former candidate, and a poll was demanded for the latter. The pavement which had been removed for the barrier had been replaced, and the ground strewn with loose gravel, which was freely used by the mob. Speeches from the King's Head and Craven Arms Hotels followed.

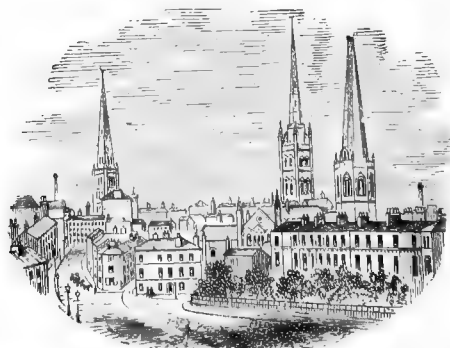
The polling commenced at the different booths with great vigour on Wednesday, 21st June, at eight o'clock, but by nine o'clock the Conservatives claimed a majority of 74. At twelve o'clock Mr. Eaton had polled 2,073 votes, and Mr. Jones 1,891. At the close of the poll the official state was declared as follows—

| | | | | |
|------------------------|-----|-----|-----|------|
| Mr. H. W. Eaton | ... | ... | ... | 2395 |
| Mr. T. M. Jones | ... | ... | ... | 2142 |
| Majority for Mr. Eaton | | | | 253 |

The news was enthusiastically received by a crowd in front of the King's Head, and both Mr. Eaton and Mr. Treherne made addresses. On the Thursday following,

MR. HENRY WILLIAM EATON

took the oaths and his seat in the House of Commons. He was a son of Mr. H. Eaton, merchant, of London, and born in 1816. Educated at Enfield, and the College Rollin, Paris, he entered into commercial life when about sixteen, and subsequently formed the firm of H. W. Eaton and Sons, silk merchants and brokers, of London. As has been seen, Mr. Eaton had shown practical sympathy with the Coventry operatives in their distress, and he now became the Conservative Member. He was a prominent figure in business, and club, life in London; and with a considerable income, the possessor of unbounded liberality during his political connection with Coventry: a man of kind heart; a Governor of at least a dozen of the Metropolitan Hospitals, Asylums, and Schools; doing many philanthropic actions. His "neat brown coach and bay horses" appeared at all "the four-in-hand meets," and at the different race meetings near London, for he was an expert whip; and, being fond of flowers, he was rarely seen without a smart bunch in the buttonhole of his coat. In 1839 he married Miss Charlotte Gorham (who died in 1877), daughter and heiress of Mr. Thomas Leader Harman, of New Orleans, and had by her three sons and two daughters. Mr. Henry Enderby Eaton, the eldest son, married, in 1872, Inna, only daughter of the late Mr. Edward Fellowes, M.P., and died in 1879. The second son, Mr. William Meriton Eaton, became a member of Messrs. H. W. Eaton and Sons, and contested Macclesfield as a Conservative. His third son, Lieutenant-Colonel Herbert F. Eaton, of the Guards, contested Coventry in 1887. The eldest daughter married Lord George Pratt, brother of the late Marquess of Camden; the second daughter was Miss Frances Eaton. An enthusiastic Freemason, Mr. Eaton was chosen Junior Grand Warden of England, by the Grand Master, the Earl of Zetland. He was a Deputy-Lieutenant of Suffolk, and also for the Tower Hamlets, and had a country residence at Porter's Park, Herts.



COVENTRY: SHOWING "BIRD'S HOTEL," FROM WHICH MR. MASON JONES SPOKE.

CHAPTER LXXXIV.

RE-ELECTION OF THE LATE MEMBERS.

Victoria, continued (1865).

A General Election—Conservatives adopt the old Members—Retirement of Mr. O. Stock—Mr. M. Jones's indecision—"Wanted immediately"—"Ye Freemen of old Coventry"—Mr. E. F. Flower and Mr. M. Jones adopted by the Liberals—Addresses—Cartoons—The proposed railway—Mr. Eaton's connection therewith—"A Liberal Churchman," and Mr. Treherne—Nomination—Show of hands—Declared in favour of Messrs. Jones and Flower—Speeches—Mr. Treherne and the Liberal press—Dastardly letter to Mr. Eaton—Polling—Final statement—Messrs. Eaton and Treherne re-elected—"Coventry Races"—Chairing procession—Celebrating the victory—Publicans accounts.



REPARATIONS were speedily made for the General Election which followed the dissolution of Parliament on the 6th July, 1865. The Conservatives adopted the old Members. The Liberals were unfortunate; Mr. Osborne Stock withdrew from the candidature, and Mr. Jones appeared undecided. A Tory bill said—"Wanted immediately, £500! To buy off a Radical who is willing to sell himself to make room for a candidate acceptable to the broadcloth Whigs;" and a Liberal one, indignant at late defeats, exclaims—

"Ye Freemen of old Coventry,
 You must have been asleep,
 To let two arrant Tories
 Into your City creep.
 Wake up then, ere it is too late,
 And let it soon be told,
 That when they come again to buy,
 They're regularly sold."

The lesson of dividing the Liberal party at the late election was apparent, and in order to make a united front, Mr. Mason Jones, representing the extreme section, and Mr. Edward Fordham Flower, ex-Mayor and brewer of Stratford-on-Avon, a gentleman of moderate and progressive views, appearing for the other portion, became the adopted candidates of the Liberal party. Mr. Flower's address was issued on the 8th, dated from the Castle Hotel.

The election being fixed for the 12th, little time was to be lost, and all four candidates were soon busy addressing their constituents.

The Conservatives issued two cartoons—the one called "The Double-faced Candidate," the other "The Trimmer," or "between two casks we fall to the ground,"

representing Mr. Flower and his different views at Windsor and at Coventry, respecting "the defence of the Church and Constitution."

A matter of special moment to Coventry was at this time introduced into the electioneering tactics. A want of further railway accommodation was urgently required, in order to stimulate competition and give greater facilities for travelling. In October, 1863, a project had been started to form a line from a point three miles north of Fenny Compton, in the parish of Bishops Itchington, on the Great Western Railway, passing through Southam and Marton to a centrally-situated station in Coventry, thus affording a second communication from the City to London, and giving a direct route to Banbury, Oxford, Reading, and Southampton.

At the desire of those connected with getting the Bill through Parliament, Mr. Eaton had in a measure become involved in the scheme, and his party endeavoured to make favourable political capital out of the circumstance, whilst opponents tried to do the opposite. A writer, in telling the circumstance in "a sketch" of Mr. Eaton's career,* thus describes the matter—

"For many years Coventry had felt the desirableness—the necessity, it might be said—from commercial and other considerations, of increased railway accommodation. Great rejoicings took place in 1865, when a Bill was passed authorizing the construction of a local junction railway, to connect the City with the Great Western system in one direction, and with the Midland in another, by means of the Nuneaton branch, over which the latter Company has running powers; a central station being projected in the Pool Meadow. The advantages of such a scheme were obvious, and Mr. Eaton became concerned in it, in a way that was little understood, and much was made of his action, or inaction, in the party controversy of the time. A handbill issued from the printing office of the Conservative newspaper, on the 5th July, 1865, stated: 'Mr. Eaton and a friend have undertaken to make the new railway, and their proposition has been accepted by the Coventry Committee. For this munificent act alone Mr. Eaton ought to receive the vote of every Elector in Coventry.' On the other hand, the Electors were informed by 'A Disappointed Shareholder' that Mr. Eaton had done nothing of the kind! that it was deceiving the Electors to represent him as having undertaken the construction of the railway. The facts appear to be that the financing of the railway was entrusted to Mr. Eaton by a resolution passed by the casting vote of the Mayor. The terms were less favourable than those offered by Mr. Kincaid, a large London contractor, and bound him to nothing unless certain obligations were discharged by the Coventry Committee. In these the Committee failed; it was found that the necessary amount of capital could not be raised; Mr. Eaton, therefore, was not called upon, and in May, 1870, the local Committee issued a circular announcing the abandonment of the project."

"A Liberal Churchman," in a handbill "to the Dissenters," by cutting a few disjointed lines from a letter of Mr. Treherne, refusing to subscribe towards the erection of a new Chapel in Coventry, endeavoured to show that gentleman in the light of a bigot, but the "cunning schemer" had the tables turned upon him by the publication of the whole of the letter, and the exposure of the source from whence the bill emanated.

The nomination took place on Tuesday at the hustings in Broadgate. The noise and uproar prevented the candidates being heard, and rendered the proceedings mere dumb show. Mr. Morgan Treherne was proposed by Dr. Phillips, and seconded by

* "Henry William Eaton, M.P. for Coventry for 21 years."—Coventry, W. W. Curtis.

Mr. B. Cox ; Mr. Eaton by Mr. R. K. Rotherham and Mr. I. Caldicott ; Mr. B. Hickling proposed, and Mr. Lawrence Booth seconded, Mr. Jones ; whilst Mr. Flower was proposed by Mr. W. H. Hill, seconded by Mr. W. Trickett. An exciting scene occurred, and "The Coventry Standard" says : "The show of hands was then taken by means of hoisting large placards, and the Mayor had much doubt as to the result, whereat there was great excitement in the booth on the part of the Radicals. While a second show was being taken for the satisfaction of his Worship, Radicals rushed at the Mayor, and bellowed at him their opinion that the show was in favour of their men, pointing out to him all localities where hands were held up for Flower or Jones. This indecent mobbing of a public functionary cannot but confuse him, and interfere with the satisfactory discharge of his duties. The Mayor, having taken a second show, gave his decision in favour of Messrs. Jones and Flower, but stated that it was exceedingly difficult to say on which side the show of hands really was. Thereupon a poll was demanded for Messrs. Treherne and Eaton."

The Conservative candidates addressed a vast assemblage in front of the King's Head subsequent to the nomination. After alluding to his vote upon the Union Changeability Bill, the question of Parliamentary Reform, the Sunday Trading, and the Permissive, Bills, coupled with lengthy arguments on the effect of the French Treaty, Mr. Treherne commented upon the tone of the Liberal press in Coventry, and the abuse and misrepresentation to which he and his colleague had been subjected ; he then read an abominable production sent to Mr. Eaton by some miscreant, praying for his death. At the close, a show of hands was called for, which proved unanimously in favour of Messrs. Treherne and Eaton. Meanwhile, somewhat similar proceedings were taking place on the Liberal candidates behalf.

Large crowds assembled against each of the polling places on Wednesday morning, and the polling proceeded rapidly on the booths being opened at eight. The Conservatives got the start, and at ten o'clock the poll stood—Eaton 1,318, Treherne 1,307, Flower 998, Jones 984 ; but during the morning the Liberals pulled up somewhat, and at noon the state was—Eaton 2,200, Treherne 2,160, Flower 2,000, Jones 1,970. During the rest of the time, until the final close of the poll, the Liberals made great efforts, and afterwards the Mayor declared the numbers to be—

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|-----|-----|------|
| Mr. Henry William Eaton ... | ... | ... | 2489 |
| Mr. Morgan Treherne ... | ... | ... | 2401 |
| Mr. Edward Fordham Flower ... | ... | ... | 2342 |
| Mr. Thomas Mason Jones ... | ... | ... | 2259 |
| <hr/> | | | |
| Majority for Eaton ... | ... | ... | 147 |
| Majority for Treherne ... | ... | ... | 59 |

MESSRS. H. W. EATON AND M. TREHERNE

were thus re-elected. A handbill has the following—

"COVENTRY RACES, JULY 12TH, 1865.

"These renowned Races took place on the old Coventry Course, on the 12th July, 1865. The following are the names of the Horses, and of their owners and riders, in the order in which they were placed by the judge at the finish—

| | |
|--|---|
| The Earl of Derby's Pride of Coventry (<i>Eaton</i>) | 1 |
| The Earl of Derby's Old Morgan (<i>Treherne</i>) | 2 |
| Lord Palmerston's Pale Ale (<i>Flower</i>) | 3 |
| Mr. Bright's Irish Quack (<i>Jones</i>) | 4 |

* * * * *

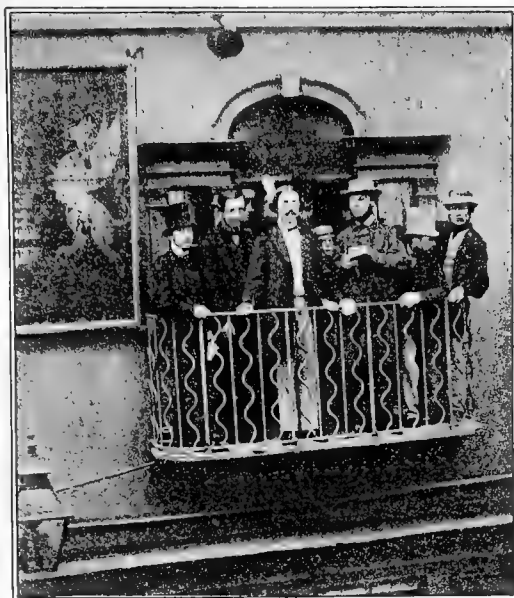
The race is easily described. So great was the confidence of the trainers of the 'Pride of Coventry' and 'Old Morgan,' that they allowed the jockeys to make the running with them at the start, confident that their powers were such as to render it unnecessary to save them for an effort at the finish. Accordingly, they galloped away up the hill, leaving their competitors a long distance behind. Coming from the same stable, there was no competition between the two horses themselves. Arrived at the top of the hill, and seeing that the others had no chance of overtaking them, Eaton and Treherne restrained the impetuosity of their horses, and cantered quietly on with a good lead, ready to shoot ahead again if occasion required. The occasion, however, never arose, for although Flower and Jones worked, and whipped and spurred in the most furious manner, Jones using frantic gesticulations, they could not catch the favourites, who cantered in easy winners, with the jockeys hands down."

The Conservative paper said: "Coventry never witnessed such excitement and enthusiasm as prevailed at the close of the poll. Thousands of people were congregated in front and in the neighbourhood of the King's Head, and every window in Broadgate, Cross Cheaping, and the locality was crowded with ladies, waving their handkerchiefs and blue ribbons—except the windows of the Castle Hotel, which presented a very deserted appearance."

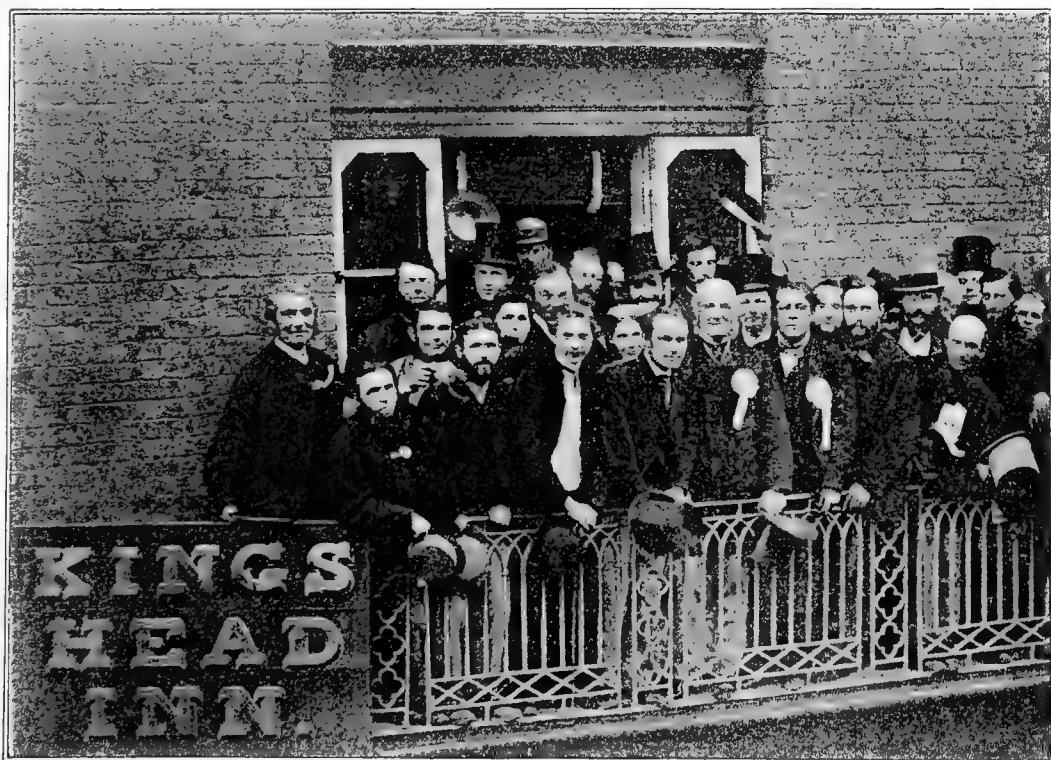
The Members, after returning their thanks, accompanied by thousands of people and several bands of music, rallied the Town, being "everywhere welcomed, with most tremendous applause."

During the day a considerable quantity of beer had been supplied to the thirsty souls of both parties, and afterwards the Conservatives celebrated their victory. The story goes that a landlord of one side put in a claim for considerably more ale than his cellars would contain. "I took the bills of the houses in my district to our chairman," adds a committee-man. He railed. "Harry," he said, "I shall go mad! What! £200 for ale in this little division! Who ordered it? Why the publicans bills show enough beer consumed to drown all the Freemen and Electors, and to deluge the streets of Coventry! However shall we pay it? I don't know! There's the man in — Street wants as much as the landlord opposite him, and so they all say! Exorbitant! But, by George, they won't get it!" Nor did they, for a composition was accepted.





COVENTRY ELECTION.—JUNE, 1865.
MR. MASON JONES AT THE CRAVEN ARMS HOTEL.
From a Photograph by Mr. J. Wingrave, Coventry.



COVENTRY ELECTION, 1865.
MESSRS. EATON AND TREHERNE AT THE OLD KING'S HEAD HOTEL.
From a Photograph by Mr. J. Wingrave, Coventry.

CHAPTER LXXXV.

VICTORY FOR THE LIBERALS.

Victoria, continued (1865 to 1867).

Lord Palmerston's death—Earl Russell, Premier—Mr. Gladstone's Reform Bill—Local Liberal meetings—Government defeats—Members votes—The Paxton memorial—Address of Thomas Atkins—Coventry and Midland Exhibition—Commencement of the bicycle trade—Mr. Disraeli's Reform Bill passed—Coventry's representation unaltered—Illness and death of Mr. Treherne—"A tribute of respect"—The funeral—Death of Sir George Turner, late M.P.—Address of Mr. W. B. Ferrand, Conservative—Account of him—Mr. H. M. Jackson's address in the Liberal interest—His speeches—His answer for being too young—Mr. M. D. Treherne recommends Mr. Ferrand—That gentleman and his traducers—A denial from Mr. Eaton—Morning of nomination—Candidates proposers—Conservative accusation against the Whigs—Mr. Jackson's reply—Polling—Mr. H. M. Jackson returned—His biography.

LORD PALMERSTON died in October, 1865, when Earl Russell became Premier, and Mr. Gladstone leader of the House of Commons. General interest centred on the latter's Reform Bill, which he introduced on the 12th March, 1866. The Coventry Liberals, at meetings in the Corn Exchange, supported it. The measure proved too strong for some members of the Liberal party (whom Mr. Bright named Adullamites). In the final division, the Government were defeated by 11. Mr. Eaton voted with the majority, 315 against 304; and Mr. Treherne, being unwell, paired with Lord Milton. Lord Russell resigned, and the Earl of Derby formed a Conservative Ministry.

A proposal to erect a memorial to the late Sir Joseph Paxton in the Coventry Cemetery, resulted some time after in the erection of a stone and granite Gothic column.

On the 26th July, 1866, an address signed Thomas Atkins appeared, informing the Freeman, Electors, and non-Electors of his intention, at the next vacancy, to offer himself as a candidate for his native City as a Liberal-Conservative. He had taken the degree of M.A., been in the Church, was "something of a crank," and in low water, but conscientious, for his address ends: "However, as I do not intend to sell my constituents, so I will not purchase them, hence not a shilling shall be spent by me, for the legal expenses must, in equity, be paid by my supporters."

On the 19th June, 1867, the Coventry and Midland Manufacturing Industrial and Art Exhibition was opened by Earl Granville. It was held in the new Market Hall, which the Corporation granted to the promoters. In spite of early difficulties, the

undertaking proved a great success, and when closed by the Earl of Clarendon on 21st October, one hundred thousand persons had attended. The profits, £775, went to the Reference Department of the Coventry Free Library, the buildings for which useful institution were generously given to the City by Mr. Alderman Gulson in 1872. Lord Leigh was President of this Exhibition; Mr. Alderman Marriott (Mayor), Vice-President; and Mr. Z. A. Binley, Secretary. The Exhibition catalogue was of great interest, showing many fine local products. Soon after this time the bicycle trade was introduced into Coventry, and, by subsequent development, became the Town's greater industry. In the catalogue appeared, "No. 81, velocipede, Robert Savage, wheelwright, Leamington." The medals awarded for the exhibits were from an artistic design by Mr. W. Fred Taunton, the publisher of "Coventry: and its Antiquities. Compiled by Benjamin Poole." Mr. Councillor John Daniel Whitley was presented with a silver cup for his exertions in originating and promoting the Exhibition.

Mr. Disraeli introduced his Reform Bill in March, 1867. The Bill was read a second time, and the measure passed. Coventry kept its two seats, and the Freemen retained their votes.

For some time Mr. Treherne's health had been far from satisfactory, but both friends and relations considered his restoration to health and active life a question of time, and when the news of his death reached Coventry in a letter from his son on the 11th July, consternation was caused in Conservative circles. He had the day before been seized with epileptic fits, which, continuing with little intermission, terminated fatally. He was essentially a Tory, and no Member felt the importance of Parliamentary duties more. The earnest manner in which he had laid before the House the case of the silk trade, and the injury inflicted upon the City by the late Commercial Treaty, shows that he was heart and soul devoted to the people he represented. In "A tribute of respect to the late Morgan Treherne, M.P.," occurred these lines—

"When first told our worthy good Member was dead,
We could scarcely believe it was true;
But soon the sad truth was confirmed, and we said—
'Adieu, faithful Treherne! Adieu!'

His time has been short the bright laurel to wear,
Which through long years he sought to attain;
For he braved the assaults of his foes, and would bear,
Though assaulted again and again.

And now that his triumphs and struggles are o'er,
And his spirit has fled to its rest,
Let us hold fast his virtues in memory's store,
And think of the land of the blest."

A deputation of Coventry Conservatives attended the funeral in Mayfield Church, Sussex, on the 17th July, and the bells of St. Michael's and Trinity Churches rang

muffled peals throughout the day. The plate on the coffin recorded : "Morgan Treherne, Esq., of 10, Stratford Place, London, M.P. for Coventry. Died 11th July, 1867, aged 63." Within a week the death of Sir George Turner, late M.P. for Coventry, was announced.

The Conservative party were unprepared for the contest, but the address of Mr. William Busfield Ferrand, a gentleman of considerable estate in Yorkshire, quickly appeared, and after explaining his views, the party adopted him almost unanimously. He was born in 1809; the son of Mr. C. F. Busfield. On the death of an uncle, he assumed the name of Ferrand. He married Sarah, daughter of Mr. John Priestly, and had several seats, of which Harden Grange, Yorkshire, was the chief. He unsuccessfully contested Bradford as a Conservative in 1837, but was returned for Knaresborough on the 29th June, 1841. Mr. Ferrand threw himself into the thick of the Corn Law fight, supported the Ten Hours Factory Bill, and opposed the harsh clauses of the new Poor Law. He is described as a strong man, of middle height, rough in bearing, unpolished in gait, "the very *beau idéal* of a gladiator, physically and intellectually," and had "not inappropriately been called Mr. William Busfield *Firebrand* instead of Mr. William Busfield *Ferrand*." But although "of coarse invectives and manner, and a rowdy in the House," Mr. Ferrand was of a kind and charitable disposition, and out of a fortune of £20,000, bestowed considerable sums of money to the relief of the poor. At a by-election, he was chosen for Devonport on the 12th February, 1863, and again returned for that borough on the 12th June, 1865. The election had been a noisy one, with much "Devonport dockyardism" displayed, and his election was declared void in May, 1866. Mr. Ferrand died in March, 1889.

On the 16th, the address of Mr. Henry Mather Jackson appeared in the Liberal interest. He stated his acceptance of the late Reform Bill with satisfaction and confidence, although passed under a Conservative Administration. He was a member of the Church of England, but would open the Universities and Endowed Schools to all Denominations. Church rates he would have abolished, and desired more effective education for the people. Mr. Jackson, after his first introduction, made many speeches at the public-houses in the various Wards, and on Saturday evening spoke, from the Craven Arms balcony, upon the many points of the Liberal programme, being received with great enthusiasm, and afterwards replied to a fault found with him by the Tories—

"He had been politely informed by the other side that he was labouring under the disadvantage of being young. He had been called a boy. Now he had arrived at the time of life at which he could almost wish he were a boy. (Laughter.) He thought he was not too old and not too young, but exactly the right age—(cheers and laughter)—and, what was more, he hoped that Mr. Ferrand would find that he never made a greater mistake than when he came to Coventry. (Hear, hear, and cheers.) He had not much political past, but had, he hoped, a future—(cheers)—whilst in the case of his opponent, there was not much hope of the future, and as for the past, why, the least said the better. (Loud laughter and cheers, and a voice, 'Two to one on the bribery colt.')

On the 17th, Mr. M. Dalrymple Treherne, son of the late Member, wrote a letter to Mr. T. Soden expressing how much his father, had he been alive, would have desired Mr. Ferrand's success. Mr. Treherne, senior, had been acquainted with that gentleman for some years, and always spoke of him as a straightforward Englishman. Amongst the speakers on the Liberal platform was Mr. William Jackson, M.P., the father of the then candidate, who characterized Mr. Ferrand "as a regular old cannon-ball Tory, one who has all his life resisted progress and acted the part of a spoliator, trying to rob his fellow-men of their political rights." As the election advanced matters grew warm, and Mr. Ferrand, in a handbill, whilst desiring to conduct the contest with gentlemanly feeling towards his opponent, denied this, and several other coarse charges made against him, in that "violent newspaper," "the Coventry Times." It had been circulated that his candidature was not agreeable to the Member; but Mr. Eaton promptly denied the statement.

The nomination took place in Broadgate on Monday morning. Mr. Jackson and his friends came from the Craven Arms to the hustings at about 9.30, Mr. Ferrand and his supporters from the King's Head a little later. The candidates were received with mingled cheers and groans. There was the usual struggle to get to the front, which fell to the Tory party, after a gallant resistance by the Liberals. At ten, the Mayor and Town Clerk reached the spot amidst the most tremendous uproar, when Dr. Phillips proposed, and Mr. E. Eardley seconded, the nomination of Mr. Ferrand; Mr. John Gulson and Mr. Lawrence Booth proposed and seconded Mr. Jackson. There was no speech-making, and the show of hands resulted so near a tie, that his Worship called for a second show, which was decided in favour of Mr. Ferrand. Both candidates then proceeded to their hotels, and addressed their respective constituents. It had been stated by the Conservatives that the Whigs tried to disfranchise the Coventry Freemen by the Reform Act of 1832, and a handbill industriously circulated had said—

"Remember, it is the Conservatives who have *conserved* your Rights and Privileges. Remember, it is the Whigs who tried to Disfranchise you, and would *suck up* your great *Seniority Fund*, and leave you to the *Workhouse* in your old age. Vote then for Ferrand, the Conservative candidate and champion of the working classes, and reject Jackson, the nominee of Gladstone and Bright."

Alluding to this question, Mr. Jackson stated that it was his decided determination, under all circumstances and hazards, to maintain the rights of the Freemen.

"Whatever may be said of the Freemen of other places—and the Freemen of other places have nothing to do with us—nothing can be said, except in their praise, of the Freemen of the great City of Coventry. (Loud applause.) I can imagine no qualification which a working man can acquire more likely to fit him for the proper exercise of a vote than an apprenticeship—the constant, laborious servitude of an apprentice to a respectable trade for seven years. (Applause.) If a boy is steady enough and respectable enough to continue under one master at one trade for so long a period as that, I myself, for my part, can have no doubt that that boy, when he becomes a man, will be steady enough, respectable enough, and intelligent enough, to form a perfectly good judgment as to how this country ought to be governed. (Loud applause.)"

The polling was on the 23rd July, and by half-past eight Mr. Jackson had a majority of 28, which increased gradually to 264 at twelve o'clock. At two his majority was 274, and the official declaration, made by the Mayor after the close of the poll, shows—

| | | | |
|------------------------------|-----|-----|-------|
| Mr. Henry Mather Jackson | ... | ... | 2429 |
| Mr. William Busfield Ferrand | ... | ... | 2123 |
| | | | <hr/> |
| Majority for Jackson | ... | ... | 306 |

MR. HENRY MATHER JACKSON

therefore became Member for Coventry. He addressed his constituents from the Castle Hotel, in Broadgate, amidst vociferous cheering, and returned thanks; and afterwards there was a rally and a procession, through the principal streets of the City. "Few Tory faces were seen in the streets, and judging from appearances, everyone was Liberal and 'dark Blue.'"

The new Member, Mr. Henry Mather Jackson, was the eldest son of Sir William Jackson, Bart., of Birkenhead, and Member for North Derbyshire, by Elizabeth, daughter of Lieutenant Hughes. He was born in 1831; educated at Harrow, and Trinity College, Oxford; called to the Bar in 1855, and created a Queen's Counsel in 1873. He married, in 1854, Elizabeth, daughter of T. B. Blackburne, Esq., by whom he had a family. As a barrister he was exceedingly popular, had a considerable fortune, and a lucrative practice. Desiring to enter the lists for Parliamentary honours, he had unsuccessfully contested Birkenhead (which first returned a Member in 1861) in the Whig interest in 1865, polling 1,060 votes, against 2,080 given for Mr. John Laird, the Conservative candidate. He was introduced to the Electors of Coventry by the Liberal veteran, Mr. Abijah Hill Pears, whom he afterwards used to allude to as "my political godfather," and, in the words of his family motto, had, "boldly, faithfully, successfully," contested the seat, but, through unforeseen circumstances, was not permitted to long occupy it at the time. He had great love for work, and at the time he was M.P. his mornings were usually spent in his chambers, New Square, Lincoln's Inn, with solicitors and clients; his days in the Courts, with briefs and witnesses; and his nights in the House of Commons. Although robust and strong, the strain of this kind occasionally affected his health, and brought on disease in the end.



CHAPTER LXXXVI.

THE STORY OF A DISASTROUS PETITION.

Victoria, continued (1867 to 1868).

Mr. Ferrand and his traducers—A cartoon—Inauguration dinner—Petition against Mr. Jackson's return—Its charges and allegations—Tried before a Select Committee—Counsel engaged—Opening remarks for petitioners—A curious payment—The Birmingham cases—Witnesses—The Coventry cases, and witnesses—Petitioners counsel's remarks—Defence of sitting Member's counsel—"Reckless remarks"—Remarks and statements—Submits no contra evidence—Decision of the Special Committee—Sir Henry Jackson unseated.

THE Liberals had at the late election, in no sparing manner, alluded to Mr. Ferrand's being unseated for bribery at Devonport during the preceding year, which riled that gentleman and his supporters considerably, and their feelings were not improved by the publication of a cartoon, showing a dog, with the name "Ferrand" on the collar, being turned out of the House of Commons, under which were some remarks made by "Punch" at the time the Tory candidate was Member for Knaresborough, entitled "Ferrand, the Lion-hearted."

Soon after Mr. Jackson's return, rumour spread that the Conservatives were determined, if possible, that a similar misfortune should befall the new Member as had come upon their candidate at Devonport, but at a dinner to inaugurate the Coventry Conservative Working Men's Association, in the Corn Exchange, on the 21st October, 1867, where Mr. Eaton, M.P., spoke, and Mr. Ferrand's health was proposed, very little upon the matter transpired; but a petition was soon after lodged against Mr. Jackson's return, signed by two gentlemen of the Conservative party. For upwards of sixty years nothing of the sort had disturbed the political atmosphere of Coventry, and the Conservatives were soon seeking evidence. The petition was of considerable length, and alleged, *inter alia*, "that bribery, treating, and corruption were practised and carried on at the election by divers persons, being agents, managers, supporters, and friends of the said Henry Mather Jackson, with a view to procure his election, and that the said election and return of the said Henry Mather Jackson were procured by means of such bribery, treating, and corruption, and that by reason of the premises and of such last-mentioned corrupt and illegal practices, the said election and return of the said Henry Mather Jackson were and are wholly null and void." The petition accused Mr. Jackson, and other persons on his behalf, with practising intimidation, treating, and undue influence,

but it did not claim the seat for Mr. Ferrand. Four gentlemen entered into the required recognizances of £250 each on the petition being lodged.

The petition was tried by a Select Committee, appointed under "The Election Petitions Act, 1848," and soon Mr. Speaker Denison's warrants for witnesses to attend were freely circulating in Coventry. The Committee, consisting of Messrs. F. S. Corrance, G. Greenall, D. K. Hodgson, W. P. Urquhart, and Sir P. Gray Egerton, Bart. (Chairman), met at the House of Commons, on the 12th March, 1868, and the case occupied until the 14th. Mr. W. H. Cooke, Q.C., and Mr. C. Sleigh were counsel for the petitioners; Mr. Serjeant Ballantine, Mr. H. James, and the Hon. Chandos Leigh appeared for the sitting Member. Messrs. Dewes and Son were the petitioners local agents, and Mr. T. H. Kirby acted for the sitting Member.

Mr. Cooke, Q.C., in opening the case, gave an outline of the evidence upon which the petitioners relied, to satisfy the Committee that the last election was a void one. He traced the history of former contests at Coventry, from the eighteenth century upwards, and gave an extract from "The Coventry Herald" for the 20th July, 1867, stating that Mr. Flower was quite prepared to come forward, but wished to stipulate for "purity of election;" and that both Messrs. Flower and Jones having been got rid of, Mr. Jackson, then perfectly unknown, had been brought forward, with a view to "go in and win." Mr. Cooke next alluded to a deputation of persons, unknown to Mr. Jackson, who waited upon him in Lincoln's Inn to invite him to stand for the City. They claimed, said Mr. Cooke, the sum of £7 2s. 6d. for their expenses in coming up, and this Mr. Jackson paid in cash. Mr. Cooke contended that this act was enough to unseat Mr. Jackson. This amount, although separate in the Returning Officer's account, had been lumped with something else in the newspaper account of election expenses. Mr. Cooke next stated that there were about thirty Freemen residing in Birmingham; they received circulars relating to the election from both sides—those from Mr. Jackson's party invited them to come to a public-house in that town, to which some went, but the "terms did not agree with the voters, and then Mr. Stephen Knapp, who had been a printer at Coventry, but at the time of the election kept a Temperance Hotel in Birmingham, took as many of them as he could collect to an inn called 'the Shakespeare,' and agreed with some score of them that he would give them a return ticket to Coventry and ten shillings each for their vote, with as much to eat and drink as they liked before they started, and a 'jolly good blow out' after they had voted for Mr. Jackson." About twenty, the counsel said, agreed to these terms. They were regaled at "the Shakespeare," and repaired to Coventry, in company with Mr. Knapp, who obtained their railway tickets, when they were taken from the station in vehicles, placarded "Vote for Jackson," to the booth, and polled for the Liberal candidate. They afterwards went to the Castle Hotel, where each was given half a sovereign, and then told to go to the Red Lion Inn,

at which "they were provided with bread and meat, and regaled with that sublime beverage called nectar." The Counsel then went to prove that Mr. Knapp was Mr. Jackson's agent, and produced various witnesses to substantiate the Birmingham cases, who stated they had received money, etc. The Town Clerk, Mr. Thomas Browett, was examined. He produced "the general account of the expenses" of Mr. Jackson's election. The items therein included one, "Paid £7 2s. 6d., expenses of the deputation on the business of the election;" the published account was a summary one. He had no account rendered by Mr. Ferrand's agent. Some half-a-dozen witnesses then gave evidence of their having been paid money by various Liberal agents in Coventry, and one of them, a deaf and dumb man, whilst explaining that he had two ten shillings and a five for his vote, declared that there were more than a hundred voters waiting to be paid at the Mechanics Arms when he received one of the ten shillings. Mr. Cooke then summed up at some length. He said his evidence had been obtained from the enemy's camp, but he believed it was enough to convince the Committee that the election was void.

Mr. Serjeant Ballantine addressed the Committee on behalf of the sitting Member. He complained of the way Mr. Cooke had made "reckless remarks," and of the attack made upon the learned gentleman whom he represented, and then alluded to the charges of bribery, and, taking the Birmingham voters, said: "There had been, no doubt, a sum of money paid to compensate the men for loss of time, but it had not been proved that the money had been given corruptly to influence the votes; it was no doubt an indiscreet payment, but it was not shown that a single man had voted differently from what he would have done without the money. If the payments were made purely to repay the men for their loss of time in going to the poll, the persons paying them would be liable to a penalty, but the payment would not invalidate the election." He alluded to the employment of messengers as a necessity, and to the alleged payment of persons at the Mechanics Arms, and urged that the evidence of the three witnesses was not of such a character that it should be allowed to unseat his client, and, after a considerable amount of argument, asked the Committee to duly weigh his observations, but did not submit any witnesses for the defence.

The Committee, having after a lapse of three-quarters of an hour considered their decision, informed the counsel through their Chairman that they had unanimously agreed to the following resolutions—

"That Henry Mather Jackson, Esq., was by his agents guilty of bribery at the last election.—That the said Henry Mather Jackson is not duly elected.—That the last election for the City of Coventry was a void election; and it was proved to the Committee that Yardley, Lee, Oswin, Weston, and Moon, were bribed by Stephen Knapp.—That it does not appear that these acts of bribery were committed with the knowledge or consent of the said Henry Mather Jackson.—That there is no reason to believe that corrupt practices have extensively prevailed at the last election."

Thus Mr. H. M. Jackson was unseated, but by no fault of his own.



Sam'l Carter

SAMUEL CARTER, Esq.,
M.P. for County, 1886.
Died, 1878.



*Yrs faithfully
Henry M Jackson*

HENRY MATHER JACKSON, Esq., Q.C. (AFTERWARDS SIR HENRY MATHER JACKSON, BART.),
M.P. for County, 1872.
Died, 1881.

CHAPTER LXXXVII.

RATIFYING THE LIBERAL GAIN, AND THE CHOOSING OF A NATIVE
OF COVENTRY.

Victoria, continued (1868).

An election to fill the vacancy—Mr. Jackson's retiring address—His regrets and explanations—Addresses of Mr. A. S. Hill (Conservative) and Mr. S. Carter (Liberal)—The latter and his connection with the City—Mr. H. M. Jackson at Coventry—His enthusiastic reception—At the Corn Exchange—Squibs and handbills—Jackson's "warming-pan"—Mr. Hill at the Exchange—"Carter and his Jackdaw"—Nomination—Polling day—Mr. Samuel Carter returned—Numbers polled—The rally prohibited—Takes place, nevertheless—A noisy procession—Stone throwing—Biography of Mr. Samuel Carter.



SOON Coventry became cast into the turmoil of another election, and on the 16th March, Mr. Jackson, "surprised and grieved at the decision of the Committee of the House of Commons," issued, from 7, Oxford Square, London, what he considered to be his parting address. He had highly valued his election, and the loss of the seat was a heavy blow to him. He assured his friends that "the best consolation to him would be the return of another Liberal Member in his place." He said: "I value electoral purity as highly as any man: I value it at least as highly as those who have accused me of electoral corruption. You know, and our opponents know, how pure my hands and my intentions were and are from that stain; and although the investigation has deprived me of my seat in Parliament, it has not deprived me of the unshaken conviction that I was your fairly and honourably elected representative;" and he adds, speaking of the payment to out-voters: "Even this payment, illegal though it may have been, unauthorized as it certainly was, was not, I believe, made or received with any corrupt intent; and I shall have the judgment of all right-thinking men when I assert that the single act of indiscretion which has sacrificed me has attached no disgrace upon you."

On the 18th March the address of Mr. Alexander Staveley Hill, who had supported Mr. Eaton on his first appearance at Coventry, appeared, and he was promptly adopted as the Conservative candidate; whilst the address of Mr. Samuel Carter, of 13, Cleveland Square, Hyde Park, who had also been adopted as a candidate by the Liberals, was issued. Briefly stating his principles, the latter gentleman declares himself "a native of Coventry, in which I passed my earlier years—my name will not be

unknown to you." Although not then a resident, he had always been interested in the City's welfare, and retiring from the active labours of his profession, was ambitious to become Mr. Jackson's successor, and promote the extension of Liberal principles.

Mr. Carter addressed a meeting at the Castle Hotel on the 18th, criticising for the most part Mr. Hill's address. Mr. Jackson came to Coventry the next day, and was brought from the Railway Station by an immense concourse of people to the Castle Hotel, from the balcony of which he spoke, and in the evening he and the Liberal candidate addressed a densely-packed meeting at the Corn Exchange, alluding to the petition, and the political questions of the day; they were also occupied in speaking at various meetings, and canvassing, throughout the week. A good many squibs and handbills were circulated by the Liberal party, who put forward their utmost exertions to secure the seat. The Electors were told to "beware of Tory bribery," and that no one of that colour should be elected for Coventry. The Conservatives had an amusing bill, headed "Jackson's warming-pan," evidently showing that Mr. Carter was keeping the seat warm for Mr. Jackson at the forthcoming General Election. Mr. Staveley Hill made many speeches, and addressed the Electors at the Corn Exchange on the 18th. The Conservatives appear to have made up their minds that as Mr. Carter was no spokesman, Mr. Jackson had come down to do all the speaking, and issued a satirical card, or cartoon, entitled "Carter and his Jackdaw," whereon the Liberal candidate was shown, having a jackdaw on his left hand, and saying, "Now, Jack, my son, speak for me."

The nomination on Wednesday morning was a scene of great disorder. Many of the multitude before the hustings in Cross Cheaping, exhibited cards with "Hill" or "Carter" upon them. Not content with making hideous noises from their throats, some had rattles, clappers, and bells, which they used vigorously ever and anon to make confusion worse confounded. The Mayor essaying to bespeak a fair hearing for the candidates, Mr. John Rotherham proposed Mr. S. Carter, and Mr. J. W. Lewis seconded him; whilst Mr. Alderman Wyley and Mr. J. Ashton proposed and seconded Mr. A. S. Hill. Amidst considerable burlesque and panoramic movements, the candidates were understood to be speaking to the mob, but their gesticulations were interrupted by the throwing of caps, bread, and other missiles into the hustings. The show of hands was greatly in favour of Mr. Hill. -

The polling commenced very early on the 26th, and at a quarter past eight Mr. Hill had a majority of 30, which he kept until ten o'clock, when Mr. Carter took the lead. Throughout the day the Liberal Committee issued bulletins showing the state of the poll, which had closed at four o'clock, when Mr. Carter was known to have been returned by nearly 300 majority, whereupon that gentleman appeared and addressed his supporters from the Castle Hotel, thanking them for the honour they had done

him, as did also Mr. Jackson. Mr. Staveley Hill addressed the Electors from the King's Head. Shortly after five, the Mayor, Mr. J. Gulson, attended by the Civic officials, declared the poll from the hustings to be—

| | | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----|-----|-----|------|
| Mr. Samuel Carter | ... | ... | ... | 2415 |
| Mr. Alexander Staveley Hill | ... | ... | ... | 2134 |
| Majority for Carter | | | | 281 |

The election had been conducted with order and decency, yet with great enthusiasm. Business, as usual, was stopped, and shutters put up, but there was far less of boisterous excitement and rude behaviour than upon former occasions. Although no cabs were hired, the number of Electors polled was about as large as before times, whilst the invalids, aged, and infirm were brought up in vehicles voluntarily lent for the occasion. Notwithstanding a prohibitory notice of the Mayor, a rally, or triumphant procession, took place about five o'clock, when an enormous crowd of many thousands started from Broadgate to perambulate the City, in which were several cabs and carts filled with jubilant partisans, and two bands of music. The procession was both noisy and disorderly, and although the streets were dirty, many women were in the ranks. The processionists at one part met with opposition, stones were thrown, and some persons more or less injured. The new Member,

MR. SAMUEL CARTER,

took his seat for the Town a few months preparatory to the General Election. Mr. Carter was born at Coventry on the 15th May, 1805. At the age of 16 he entered the office of his uncle, Mr. Josiah Corrie, a Birmingham solicitor, with whom he afterwards entered into partnership. He became connected with the London and North Western Railway, and acted from its commencement as the Company's solicitor, but resigned in 1860. He also was legal adviser to the Midland Railway Company from the year 1835 till he entered Parliament at this time, so that for twenty-five years he acted as solicitor to both Companies. He was the son of Mr. Samuel Carter, who held an office in the old "City and County of Coventry," and also a nephew of Mr. John Carter, for many years Town Clerk before the passing of the Municipal Corporations Act. Of Mr. Carter personally it may be said he was a very worthy man, courteous and gentlemanly in his manners, even in his political conflicts. Some of the Coventry institutions owe him gratitude for his liberality, and the promotion of their efficiency and success. Mr. Carter resided chiefly at Quarry Hill, Battle, Sussex, and subsequently at "the Spring," Kenilworth.



CHAPTER LXXXVIII.

UNDIVIDED CONSERVATIVE REPRESENTATION.

Victoria, continued (1868).

Mr. Disraeli, Premier—Parliament dissolved—The Extended Suffrage—Candidates and addresses—Messrs. Carter and Jackson for the Liberals—Messrs. Eaton and Hill for the Conservatives—Mr. Eaton's popularity—Arrival of Messrs. Carter and Jackson—Their speeches—Mr. Carter on the Irish Church—Mr. Jackson and the French Treaty—Mr. Gladstone's letter—Cartoon, "The Political Cheap Jacks"—Messrs. Eaton and Hill's reception and arrival—Their speeches—Mr. Hill upon the Reform Act, and other topics—Mr. Eaton and his connection with the proposed railway—Party bills about the matter—Cartoons, "The Political Railway Schemers," and "Serious Accident on the Southam Railway"—The Town Clerk's letter—Scene at the last open nomination—Polling—Messrs. Eaton and Hill elected—Last public declaration of numbers from the hustings—Cartoons, "Coventry Steeplechase, No. 2," "Putting out two of Gladstone's Bright Radical Lights," "The Champions of the Arena"—A chairing Cartoon—Biography of Mr. A. S. Hill—Resignation of the Disraeli Cabinet—Formation of Mr. Gladstone's Ministry.



FTER Parliament met, in November, 1867, Lord Derby retired from office, and Mr. Disraeli became Prime Minister; but on the 11th November, 1868, Parliament was dissolved, partly to give effect to the new Reform Act, which increased the electorate, and extended the suffrage to rated householders and lodgers.

Early in September, the addresses of Messrs. Carter and Jackson appeared, as also that of Mr. Eaton. The latter gentleman had shown such liberality in aiding every good work connected with Coventry, which, coupled with his commercial standing, rendered him a very fit candidate for the Town, and the Conservatives looked forward to his return as almost a certainty, but experienced some difficulty in obtaining a second candidate. At length, however, Mr. Alexander Staveley Hill was prevailed upon to again come forward in their interest, and on the 16th October, his address, detailing Conservative opinions, appeared.

On the arrival of Messrs. Carter and Jackson on the 19th, they were met at the Coventry Railway Station by their supporters, who, headed by a band, proceeded with them to their headquarters at the Castle Hotel, from the balcony of which addresses were given, followed in the evening by some exceedingly long speeches made by those gentlemen at the Corn Exchange. Mr. Carter referred to the question of the Irish Church, and other matters, whilst Mr. Jackson alluded to that "terrible old sore

in Coventry," the French Treaty. He denied that it was a party question, and, if elected, would endeavour "to induce the Government of France to remove the French duty upon the imports of English silk," and said: "I think I am right when I say that the French Treaty was ratified on the 4th February, 1860, and was to continue for ten years from that date. Therefore, it will terminate on the 4th February, 1870, but it was stipulated that the revision or withdrawal of it is to be at the expiration of twelve months notice, consequently any notice of alteration, to be in time, must be made before the 1st February, 1869," and he blamed Mr. Eaton, as a supporter of the existing Administration, for allowing the Session to pass without making an attempt in Coventry's favour. On this subject Alderman Soden had addressed a letter to Mr. Gladstone, desiring sympathy from him with Coventry, and asking to be equally dealt with the French in the matter of silk goods imported into France. Mr. Gladstone's guarded reply was as follows—

"6th November, 1868.

Sir,—I have had the honour to receive your letter of yesterday, and I return the inclosure. In any proceedings for the renewal of the Treaty with France, it would certainly be the duty of the British Government to press for the nearest possible approach to a perfect freedom of trade, especially in the case of silk goods of all kinds, on the side of that country; and I am persuaded that the freedom with which, in 1860, we opened our own ports, would powerfully recommend any representations to a similar effect which might be submitted to the Government of France.

With cordial good wishes,

I remain, Sir, your faithful servant,

H. Soden, Esq.

W. E. GLADSTONE."

The Tories censured Mr. Gladstone for his work connected with the Treaty; and desiring the Electors to reject Messrs. Carter and Jackson, issued various condemnatory bills detracting upon the matter, together with a cartoon entitled "The Political Cheap Jacks," further alluding thereto.

Messrs. Eaton and Hill arrived in the City on the 26th, and after an enthusiastic reception at the Railway Station, were conducted by their procession, amidst bands and banners, in an open carriage drawn by four grey horses, to the King's Head Hotel, where they made introductory speeches; after which a large and enthusiastic meeting was held in the Corn Exchange. Mr. Hill spoke at considerable length upon the Reform Act, and many other political topics, and Mr. Eaton alluded to the blame which had been thrown upon him by a section of the Liberal community with reference to the part he had taken in the projected railway, as follows—

"Attacks have been made on me in the public press of this City with reference to the proposed new railway to Southam. (Hear, hear.) It has been broadly stated that I am responsible for that railway not having yet been made. Gentlemen, to that statement I give the most unqualified contradiction. (Loud cheers.) There is not a word of truth in it. (Cheers.) I will tell you in a very few words the whole history of my connection with that railway project. A few days before the Railway Bill received the Royal assent, I was waited upon by several gentlemen from Coventry, among whom were Mr. Minster (the then Mayor), the Town Clerk, Mr. Henry Soden, Mr. Richard Robbins, and the late Mr. Thomas Soden. I was told by these gentlemen that it would be a great assistance to the railway project if I would give a guarantee to the Government for the sum of £14,400, which the promoters of the railway had become responsible for. (Hear, hear.) I was

given to understand that unless this guarantee was forthcoming, there was a probability of the Bill being lost, as not one of those gentlemen would take the responsibility. (Hear, hear.) Well, gentlemen, I gave the required guarantee—(loud cheers)—and I am still responsible for, and liable to pay, that sum of £14,400 in case the railway is not made. (Cries of 'Shame.') Now at the time I consented to relieve the promoters of this responsibility for the £14,400, I distinctly stated that my liability must go no further. (Hear, hear.) I distinctly declined to have anything whatever to do with the line, and it was only on that understanding that I consented to give the guarantee. (Cheers.) Why, gentlemen, is it likely that a man in trade, like myself, could undertake to make a line that might cost two hundred thousand pounds? ('Ridiculous.') I do think some one or other of those gentlemen who applied to me upon this subject might have spared me the trouble of making this public statement—(loud cheers)—by coming forward and giving the true version of the matter—(a voice: 'They have not honour enough')—and it would have been more graceful in them to have done so, from their being nearly all political opponents of mine. (Renewed cheers.) I now leave this subject, and I beg to say that I shall take no further notice of any anonymous statements with regard to it, whether in newspaper articles or scurrilous handbills—(hear, hear)—but if any gentleman disputes the accuracy of this statement thus publicly made, let him come forward publicly, in his own proper person, and I will meet him. (Loud cheers.)"

The Liberals endeavoured to make considerable capital out of Mr. Eaton's connection with the proposed railway, and two cartoons appeared, one entitled "The Political Railway Schemers," and the other "Serious Accident on the Southam Railway;" in the former was depicted the meeting of the promoters at Mr. Eaton's business premises, and in the latter, Messrs. Jackson and Carter winning the election or race easily, with the Conservative candidates in difficulties. Anonymous party scribblers also issued various handbills and letters, whereupon Mr. Thomas Browett, as Solicitor, issued a full reply, stating, that the true explanation why the line had not been executed was the adversity of the times, especially against railway enterprise, and denying that the failure to carry out the project was in any way attributable to either Mr. Eaton or the promoters.

Meetings were held and addresses delivered by the candidates at various places in the ordinary fashion until the date of the election, which took place on the 17th November. At the nomination the day before; which as usual was at a hustings in Broadgate; on Monday morning, the booth was crowded, and, as usual, a vast concourse filled the whole of Broadgate. The proceedings, although noisy, were not so violent as heretofore, and; from the usual voluntary shows of hands, oft repeated, before the commencement of the transactions; showed that the majority of persons present were in favour of Messrs. Eaton and Hill, who, on coming to the front of the hustings, were loudly cheered. On the appearance of Messrs. Carter and Jackson, there was considerable groaning, mingled with cheers. At ten, the Mayor, Mr. John Gulson, with the Town Clerk, Mr. T. Browett, and officers, arrived, but no word uttered was audible. Mr. Eaton's proposers were Mr. William Odell and Mr. Isaac Caldicott; Mr. Hill's, Alderman Wyley and Mr. Jeremiah Taylor; whilst those of Mr. Carter were Mr. Richard Caldicott, junr., and Mr. Lawrence Booth; and Mr. Jackson's, Alderman H. Soden and Mr. W. H. Gardner. "The Coventry Standard," speaking of this the last public nomination, says: "The show of hands for each candidate was then taken, and was pronounced in favour of Messrs. Eaton and Hill. The whole of the space

immediately in front of the booth was occupied by Messrs. Eaton and Hill's supporters, who extended in a gradually narrowing line further than the Castle Hotel. Messrs. Carter and Jackson's supporters formed a triangular-shaped mass, commencing from the footway, at some distance in front of the booth, and gradually widening backwards. There must have been three to one, if not a greater proportion, in favour of Messrs. Eaton and Hill."

On Tuesday the polling proceeded briskly. At a quarter-past six the Mayor was escorted to the hustings in Broadgate, and announced the numbers at the close of the poll to be—

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|---------------------|-----|-----|-----|------|
| H. W. Eaton, Esq. | ... | ... | ... | 3781 |
| A. S. Hill, Esq. | ... | ... | ... | 3762 |
| H. M. Jackson, Esq. | ... | ... | ... | 3594 |
| S. Carter, Esq. ... | ... | ... | ... | 3576 |

MESSRS. EATON AND HILL

being elected.

The Conservatives issued a cartoon, "Coventry Steeplechase, No. 2," showing the result different from that predicted in the Liberal cartoon printed during the election. They also had several others; one, "The putting out two of Gladstone's Bright Radical Lights," and a second, "The Champions of the Arena," whilst another showed the chairing of Messrs. Eaton and Hill, entitled "Extraordinary flight of two Radical Birds from Coventry, at four o'clock on Tuesday, November 17th, 1868," wherein the Liberal candidates are depicted as birds of passage taking "Farewell to Coventry," and the Conservative Members mounted in a car surrounded by their friends, proceeding in procession through Broadgate.

The newly-elected Member, A. S. Hill, was born at Dunstall Hall, Staffordshire, in 1825, and came of a good family. He received his education at Birmingham Grammar School, in the house of Dr. Lee, the future first Bishop of Manchester, in company with Benson, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, Rendal, Westcott, Evans, Lightfoot, and other celebrities. From thence he entered Exeter College, Oxford, and having taken his degree, was elected to a Fellowship of St. John's; subsequently taking that of D.C.L., he became appointed an Examiner in Law and Modern History. In 1852 he was called to the Bar of the Inner Temple, and joined the Oxford Circuit, being elected at the same time as Mr. Henry Matthews, Mr. Ward Hunt, and Sir Henry James. His practice became a large one, ranging from criminal, probate, divorce, to Parliamentary business. He devoted himself energetically to the Volunteer movement, which he joined in 1859, when in its infancy, and for many years worked in the cause of Imperial Federation.

Finding that the House, as re-constituted, would be against his party, Mr. Disraeli resigned before Parliament met, and the Queen sent for Mr. Gladstone, who formed an Administration in December, 1869.

CHAPTER LXXXIX.

"A RETALIATORY PETITION."

Victoria, continued (1868 to 1869).

Liberal dissatisfaction—Causes petition to be lodged—Against Messrs. Eaton and Hill's return—Conservative feeling—Their meeting at Corn Exchange—Excitement in the City—Trial at Coventry—Before Mr. Justice Willes—Receiving the Judge—Counsel engaged—Mr. H. James's opening speech for the petitioners—His case explained—Witnesses and evidence—Mr. J. W. Huddlestons's address for the respondents—His defence—The sitting Members in the witness-box—Other evidence and rebutting evidence—Counsel's summing up—Mr. Justice Willes's elaborate and careful judgment—Goes separately through the evidence—"The Treaty"—His decision—Declares Mr. Eaton and Mr. Hill duly elected—Costs reserved—Excitement upon the result—The Members chaired—Conducted to the hotel and railway station.

NATURALLY the Liberal party at Coventry were dissatisfied with the Conservative successes, but no one felt the defeat more keenly than Mr. Carter. A petition was quickly decided upon, and presented early in December, signed by thirty-one Liberals. It declared, *inter alia*, that at the election on the 17th November, Messrs. Eaton and Hill "were, by themselves and other persons on their behalf, guilty of bribery, treating, and undue influence, during and after the said election, whereby they are incapacitated from serving for the said City." The fourth clause was a special and unusual one, and the requisition asked that the election should be wholly null and void.

The Conservative party felt that the petition was to be a retaliatory one, and at a large meeting, held at the Corn Exchange, on 12th December, the Members spoke, when favourable resolutions were passed commending them. Up to, and during the hearing of the case, the City was in a state of considerable excitement, and both sides were busy obtaining and preparing witnesses.

The trial took place under the Parliamentary Elections Act, 1868, at the Court House, Coventry, before Mr. Justice Willes, and occupied from the 16th to the 20th February, 1869, whereat the formalities of the High Courts were observed, and the public admitted to hear the evidence.

On the Judge's reception, "Peeping Tom," in "the Coventry Herald," amusingly dilates—

"To receive the Judge with proper grace,
The Mayor and Town Clerk too,
With those quaint chaps—the Sword and Mace—
Up to the station drew.

And I was asked if I'd make one
 To heighten up the show;
 But thinking they were poking fun,
 Why, I declined to go.

And if the Queen herself had come,
 More fuss there scarce could be,
 For crowds of citizens left home
 The learned Judge to see."

Mr. Justice Willes, when taking his seat on Tuesday morning, had upon his right the Mayor (Mr. John Gulson), and Messrs. Eaton and Hill; and on his left, Mr. Carter and the Court officials. The petitioners counsel were Mr. Henry James and the Hon. E. C. Leigh; and for the sitting Members, Mr. J. W. Huddleston, Q.C., Mr. Gates, and Mr. Dugdale.

In opening the case, Mr. James stated the nature of the petition, and related circumstances connected with previous elections. In 1861, Coventry had 41,000 inhabitants, and previous to the Reform Act of 1867 the Freemen and Electors numbered about 5,000, whilst at the last election they numbered 7,700. Messrs. Carter and Jackson determined to observe all the provisions against corrupt practices. After alluding to the temptations of the poorer Elector, the learned counsel said the majority for the sitting Members was under 200, so if only a small number were influenced by corrupt practices, the result could be attributed to such influences. Messrs. Carter and Jackson had on the night before the poll promises exceeding 3,900 in number, and therefore expected a majority, but, instead, suffered a defeat. They inquired into the non-fulfilment of these promises, and came to the conclusion that the facts to which he should direct his Lordship's attention, showed the causes whereby their opponents had succeeded at the last election. He was not about to prove any bribery in large amounts, but if one side observed the law, the other would find easy opportunities of obtaining votes by small means. The case depended upon instances of little temptations sometimes refused, and small cases of bribery often accepted. Proceeding, the learned counsel said—

"He would deal with a class of cases about which, if he established them before his Lordship, there was no doubt they would void the election. Between the 31st of July, when the register was made up, and the 17th November, when the election took place, there would be a number of persons leave the City, and if the term out-voters were applied to them, it would probably be incorrect, because, by the Act of 6 Vic., those persons had no right to vote at all. He would not discuss what he might call the legal morality of that provision, or whether, according to political morality, they ought to vote."—The Judge: "They ought not."—Mr. James proceeded: "At all events, if a system was established to bring these out-voters to the poll, and if they were taken to the poll, by the agents of the sitting Members, and if they were found polling and were rewarded for polling, it would not be immaterial for his Lordship to consider whether from the commencement the law had not been systematically and intentionally broken. At the last election, there resided at least thirty of these persons at Leicester. There was no doubt that however carefully that system was woven, a system was organized and carried into execution, and it was that these voters should be brought into Coventry, and should be polled on behalf of Mr. Eaton and Mr. Hill."

Proceeding, Mr. James said that a gentleman whose name he mentioned, and who was no doubt an agent to the sitting Members, placed himself in communication with another person living at Leicester, when

"A sort of scene was enacted by which the voters were brought together, and were carefully told that the law was so strict that no money could be given to them for their loss of time, and trouble, and expenses, but a friend of the cause had lent a vehicle to convey them to Coventry. If they had a right to vote, there would be no censure to be cast upon that friend. He found, however, that the friend was a somewhat imaginary individual; but, in order to give colour to the transaction, *somebody was dressed as a gentleman's servant in livery*, and a van full of these voters was driven over by this '*livery*' gentleman. (Laughter.) Before starting, it was explained to these voters that the law prevented them from receiving anything in the way of compensation, but the agreeable announcement was made that they would be made 'all right.' It was in the sense in which these words were used that his Lordship would find, if the truth were arrived at, that this person paid to these voters for a certain ward, a day or two after the election, fifteen shillings each."

Mr. James next complained that some of his witnesses had been removed from the Town, and avowedly by the petitioners for safe custody, and provided with a place to live in; he asked for a warrant, whereupon the Judge hoped that such suspicion was groundless, and Mr. Huddleston stated that he had just the same charge to bring against his friend and his witnesses. Mr. James proceeded to deal with the circumstances of voters from Dudley, Birmingham, and London, who he said had received money, and then passed on to numerous small and minute cases, of which he proposed to elicit evidence. He then, at considerable length, alluded to the numerous charges of alleged bribery and corruption in Coventry, going through the evidence of witnesses which he proposed to bring. Having alluded to the fourth paragraph, he concluded as follows—

"He had now stated to his Lordship the allegations relied on in support of this petition in as brief and terse a manner as he was able to, but there was one matter he could not help referring to, to account to his Lordship for the meagreness of proof, which arose in some cases from a disinclination of witnesses; and with respect to others, he had stated the course pursued in approaching the witnesses, and even the removal of some of them, and he did feel, after consideration, that it was right to call his Lordship's attention to the fact that there had even been public exhortation made to persons not to give evidence. He referred to the meeting at the Corn Exchange, after the presentation of the petition, and concluded by stating that he felt it right to say, from the instructions he had received, that those who were petitioners there felt that it was a comparatively unimportant result whether that Borough was represented by gentlemen holding one view of politics or another, but it was important that those who represented the Borough should be purely and truthfully elected. One of the defeated candidates was connected with the City by birth, the other had been adopted by it, and they thought that the new voters should, while on the threshold of political life, be taught that for the future elections must be conducted here legally, and without any improper inducements being held out to them to give their votes."

In substantiation, Mr. James proceeded to call numerous witnesses to prove the Leicester, Birmingham, Dudley, and London cases. No less than forty-five witnesses, male and female, were examined to prove bribery and treating in very small sums in Coventry, as were various other persons to substantiate the agency of various Conservatives. The evidence (far too lengthy to be repeated here) was weak in points, and given in some cases with considerable equivocation and untrustworthiness.

Mr. Huddleston addressed the Court at considerable length in reply. He felt some anxiety about the case, not from the weight of evidence, but from the fact of his personal acquaintance with both the respondents, whom he was sure would not condescend to lend themselves to the devices suggested in the petition. He complained of the course taken on behalf of the petitioners in dealing with persons with a view to get evidence, and would have liked to have seen the canvass of Messrs. Carter and Jackson, in order to ascertain whether, as reported, a mistake of 500 had been made in adding up. The French Treaty had had its effect upon the weavers, who were principally enfranchised by the last Reform Bill. The learned gentleman then referred to the alleged cases of bribery, and discussed the right of non-residents to vote, contending it was always the custom to poll out-voters, but that if there was a scrutiny, the question whether they were residents or non-residents would have to be discussed then. The Leicester cases were simple ones. Messrs. Eaton and Hill's return was safe; they had a majority of about 160 on their canvass. They received information about twenty-four voters in Leicester from a Conservative friend, and someone was sent to see them, but most distinct orders were given that there should be nothing in the shape of conveyance or payment of expenses. He should produce evidence to contradict that given. Mr. Huddleston next dealt with the cases of other out-voters, and then proceeded to consider the charges of direct bribery, which he said he should meet in a perfectly satisfactory manner, and concluded by saying that although a professional expert had been sent down, and ransacked Coventry for four months, out of a Town of 40,000 inhabitants and 8,000 voters, the petitioners were only able to present "six cases of alleged bribery, and the whole alleged sum total paid, added together, amounted to the sum of £3 5s. 6d." The evidence, said the learned counsel, as to these ridiculously small cases, showed that there was nothing like systematic bribery at the late election.

Mr. Henry William Eaton, one of the sitting Members, was then called, and examined as to his connection with the Coventry elections. Mr. A. S. Hill was his colleague; but at the dissolution of Parliament, Mr. Hill was not then a candidate. He declined to stand, but subsequently consented. They came down on the 26th October, when their opponents had got a week's start. He gave his agent most positive instructions that no illegal practices should be resorted to; and with regard to the Leicester voters, he told him that as they were certain of a majority of 160, their expenses for coming would not be paid, and it was not worth while sending for them, but, said the Member, "the voters were brought in my carriage, which was sent from Hertfordshire, and the gentleman who is said to have been dressed up is my coachman." Examined as to what he knew of Mr. Hill's election expenses in March, 1868, he understood there was a claim, but knew nothing beyond about it. With reference to the November election, he produced a letter from Mr. Frederick Gray, of October 14th, 1868, defining the basis upon which he and Mr. Hill should work together, and to which he the next day replied accepting.

The terms contained in the letter, although not read at the time, subsequently transpired.

Mr. A. S. Hill, M.P., as the next witness, explained, that about three weeks after the election in March, 1868, there was a claim made upon him for a sum of money which it was alleged had been expended. There were circumstances which prevented him from attending to it at the time, but it was finally settled in July, 1868, when he had no idea whatever of contesting Coventry a second time. It was not until October that he agreed to contest the City again, and, like Mr. Eaton, he did not sanction, neither was he aware of, any illegal proceeding taking place during the election.

On Friday, the legal gentleman acting as the agent of Messrs. Eaton and Hill at the last election, was examined, and his evidence was followed by that of Mr. Henry Eaton, the son of one of the sitting Members. He came down just before the election ; and went to Leicester. He saw his father's coachman, and told him that he was to meet the voters, but on no account were they to go near public-houses. One horse in the vehicle was his own, and the other two belonged to his father. He believed the numbers to be from twenty-two to twenty-five. The carriage broke down, but he did not know whose carriage or whose horses completed the second stage of the journey. The rest of the day, the Court was occupied in hearing examination and cross-examination of the respondents witnesses, who denied the allegations of those of the petitioners, or gave evidence of a contrary nature. Mr. Huddlestons's summing up was followed by that of Mr. James, who had not finished when the Court rose.

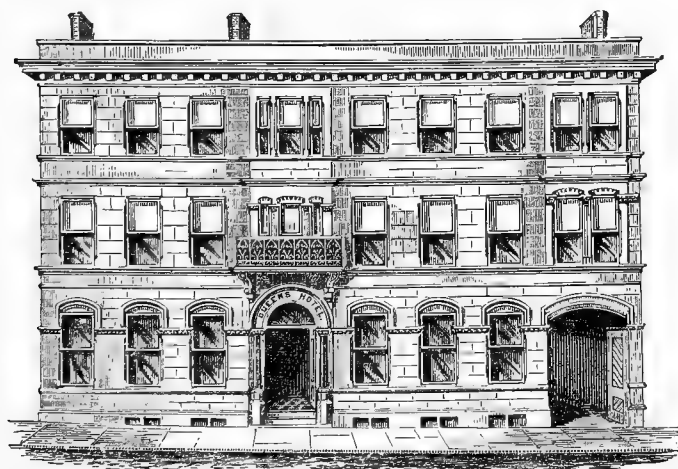
Mr. Justice Willes delivered a long and elaborate judgment. First going through the grounds and nature of the petition, he then proceeded to deal, in detail, with the cases separately. Taking those of alleged corrupt treating first, he decided that they were out of the question. The supper at Radford, held to celebrate the Tory success at the registration, was paid for by those partaking of it, and did not come within the statute. The learned Judge expressed an opinion that in inserting the fourth clause in the petition, the petitioners really referred to the sum left unpaid for a time after Mr. Hill's first contest of March, 1868, and their intention was to assail the return of Messrs. Eaton and Hill upon the ground that there had been a payment by Mr. Eaton of that amount. In that point of view the petition had failed, as Mr. Hill had made the payment himself in the previous July, when he did not intend again to contest Coventry.

His Lordship reviewed the question of Mr. Eaton's payment of expenses at the last election. He then dealt with the Leicester cases at some length, and finally said he believed that no money was paid, or promised to be paid, to those voters. Next weighing the evidence of the Birmingham cases, he also decided them in favour of the respondents ; and with reference to the two London voters, as to one of whom it was said that a person "gave him 50s., and promised the same amount to the other, his Lordship observed that if either party had asked for delay to produce him, he should have

granted it." Petitioners offered no evidence as to his absence, and he concluded that it was not designed by the respondents. He had heard no proof that he was an agent, and "therefore he did not act upon the evidence of the London witnesses." The Dudley case, through the untrustworthy evidence, he decided in favour of the respondents. His Lordship then reviewed the alleged direct cases of bribery at Coventry, and examined them one by one, showing that that part of the case had failed, as had also the cases of offers of bribery; but, as in his judgment the "petition had been most reasonably presented and prosecuted," he said nothing about costs; and finally declared—

"I deem and determine that Henry William Eaton, whose return was complained of by the petition, was duly elected and returned; that Alexander Staveley Hill, whose return was complained of by the petition, was duly elected and returned; that no corrupt practice has been proved to have been committed by, or with the knowledge or consent of, either candidate at such election; that no evidence is before me that corrupt practices have, nor that there is reason to believe that corrupt practices have, extensively prevailed at the election. I shall certify to the Speaker of the House of Commons accordingly."

The decision was received with loud cheers by the crowd outside the Court House, and on its becoming known, great excitement prevailed throughout the City. After the Judge had left, Messrs. Eaton and Hill were chaired to the King's Head Hotel by their enthusiastic supporters. The crowd waited outside, expecting that speeches would be made, and finally accompanied the Members to the Railway Station, where Messrs. Eaton and Hill briefly thanked them.



THE QUEEN'S HOTEL, COVENTRY: HEAD-QUARTERS OF
W. H. W. BALLANTINE, ESQ., M.P., 1892.

CHAPTER XC.

THE COVENTRY CASE: THE FRENCH TREATY.

Victoria, continued (1869 to 1872).

Liberal dissatisfaction with result of petition—Leads to presentation of a second one—Case brought before the House—An Enquiry asked for—Allegations—Opinions of Members—The motion negatived—Cartoon, "The Last of the Election Petition"—Liberal banquet—Presentation—The meeting about the French Treaty—Mr. Staveley Hill's motion for a Committee of Inquiry—Speeches of Mr. Hill and Mr. Eaton—Supporters and opponents—The motion rejected—Mr. Eaton purchases the Park, or Cheylesmore, Estate—Introduces the leasehold system upon the property.

STILL smarting from their defeat, the Coventry Liberals were by no means satisfied with the result of the late petition, and in June a second one was presented, signed by various members of their party. Mr. Samuel Carter's friend, Mr. E. P. Bouverie, the Member for Kilmarnock, introduced the subject of the petition in connection with the trial at Coventry before Mr. Justice Willes, to the House of Commons, on the 6th July. He alluded, to the evidence of two witnesses examined who alleged that they had received payment; to other matters; and then moved for "the appointment of a Select Committee to inquire into the allegations of the second petition respecting the late Inquiry into the election of Members for the City of Coventry, and that the Committee should report their opinion as to what proceedings, if any, should be taken thereon." He stated that a person "who was said to have given money to various voters could not then be found, and that three days before the election Inquiry a certain agent (it was thought) paid him money to go to a place some miles from Coventry, so that he might not be called as a witness." Mr. Hardy thought the House ought not to interfere in a case of this description, Mr. Denman, whilst not approving, considered that the Judge's decision was absolutely final, and after considerable argument, the motion was negatived without a division. A Conservative cartoon, "The Last of the Election Petition," humorously showed the outside and inside of the petitioners' solicitor's office, and gave the supposed conversations of their opponents before, and after, this last stage of the proceedings.

The Liberals held a banquet in April, 1869, whereat Mr. Jackson was presented with a portrait of himself by a local artist, Mr. Jesse Lee.

A public meeting was held at the Corn Exchange on Wednesday evening, the 10th February, 1869, called by the Mayor (Mr. J. Gulson), in compliance with a

signed requisition desiring the consideration of the necessity for impressing on the Government that the French Commercial Treaty, now about to expire, ought not to be renewed, except on perfectly equal terms as regards duties on all manufactured goods. At this meeting it was proposed that a petition be forwarded to the Members for presentation to the House of Commons, asking: "That as the term of the French Treaty will shortly expire, there may be no renewal of the engagement except on terms of perfect equality and reciprocity, and that the same advantages may be secured to the manufacturing interests of this country as are given to our foreign competitors."

On the 18th June, Mr. Staveley Hill proposed in the House of Commons "that a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into, and report upon, the operation of the Commercial Treaty with France, ratified on the 13th January, 1860, particularly as it affects the silk manufacture of this country." In introducing the motion, he traced the history of the silk trade in England, and dealt at considerable length upon the effect the Treaty had had upon the manufacturers and weavers throughout the country, and Coventry in particular. Giving the story of how the Treaty was so quietly made, he declared that the silk trade in England was sacrificed in order to get the Emperor to agree to the Treaty. "It was evident," he said, "Mr. Cobden only accepted this Treaty as a lesser evil, believing that it might lead to a great good; this, however, it had not done. But, more than that, if the Treaty is to be reconsidered at all, its reconsideration properly belongs to this Session of 1869. The Treaty came into force in February, 1860, and it was to last till February, 1870, and after then from year to year, unless notice is given of its revision; and I venture, therefore, to say that this is now the time when the consideration of the Treaty properly comes under the notice of the House." Mr. Eaton, in seconding the motion, drew attention to the diminution in the consumption of raw silk in this country since the Treaty, and stated that it was the unanimous wish of the trade that an Inquiry should be held; but the resolution, which was supported by Messrs. Brocklehurst, Cross, Chadwick, Wheelhouse, Bentinck, and Newdegate, and opposed by Messrs. Bright (for the Government), Crum-Ewing, Muntz, and Mundella, was lost, there being for it 101, and against 155, the majority against the motion being 54.

In July, 1871, Mr. Eaton purchased the Coventry Park Estate from the Marquis of Hertford; rumour said the price paid for it was nearly one hundred thousand pounds. He subsequently gave the site for St. Michael's Vicarage, and the land for a new road to Coventry Station from Greyfriars Green. The estate included the greater portion of the Poddycroft, through which, in 1886-7, a wide approach was made for the use of the public from the Holyhead Road to the Station. The lettings of the land fronting the Warwick Road upon leasehold tenure introduced that system upon the property, and it was afterwards used by the Freeman's Trustees under the Award of 1860, upon their estates.

CHAPTER XCI.

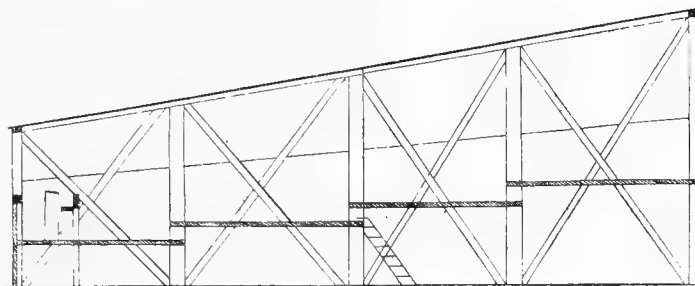
DIVIDED REPRESENTATION.

Victoria, continued (1873 to 1880).

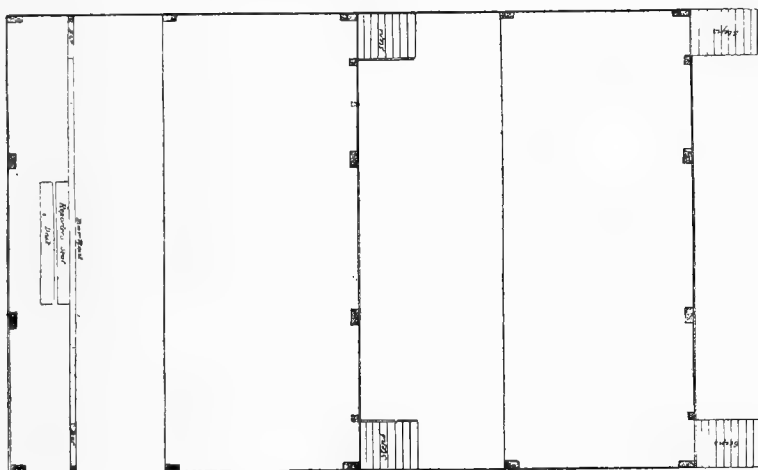
Mr. Hill's withdrawal—His after biography—Dissolution of Parliament—Addresses of Mr. Carter and Mr. Jackson—Mr. Eaton's address—Mr. Frederic Du Pre Thornton is chosen for a second Conservative candidate—Is unknown—A cartoon, "China Organzine; well weighted"—The writs issued—Ballot Act does away with public nominations, etc.—The nominating before the Mayor at St. Mary's Hall—Result of the poll—Resignation of Mr. Gladstone—Mr. Disraeli's Conservative Ministry formed—Liberal sympathy with Mr. Carter—Inclosure of 1875—"The World's" description of the senior Member—Deaths in his family—Mr. Carter's death—Mr. Wheelhouse's motion.



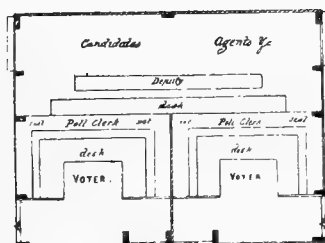
MR. HILL stated his desire to withdraw at the ensuing election, and the Conservative party were left to seek another candidate. Preferring to stand for the division of Staffordshire, in which his residence, Oxley Manor, was situate, he there sought election, and was chosen for West Staffordshire from 1874 to 1885, and for the King Swinford division of Staffordshire since that date. Few men deserved better of the Conservative party than Mr. Hill, who for nearly twenty years proved himself to be one of the ablest men and best lawyers in the House. He is said to have been marked out by Mr. Disraeli in 1869 for high legal preferment, and having contested Coventry, somewhat against his own inclination, was elected, but only to find Mr. Gladstone installed in power; so whilst most of the other Conservative lawyers had suffered defeat, no little work on behalf of the Opposition devolved upon him. "When the Conservatives returned to office in 1874, it was very ungenerously found convenient to forget the man who was to have been one of the law officers in 1869, and other appointments were made." In spite of this, Mr. Hill continued to do even better work for the party, although much of his time was taken up in business with rating and railway cases. He was, however, appointed Counsel to the Admiralty, and Judge Advocate of the Fleet, by Mr. Ward Hunt. Mr. Hill in 1881 went to Canada, to ascertain for his constituents its practical capabilities for emigration. The delights of the New World so pleased him, that he not only established a large cattle ranche in the Far West, but returned there himself in successive autumns, and eventually published his delightful book, "From Home to Home," charmingly depicting life near the Rocky Mountains—a book which, dedicated to the Princess Louise, contains useful information upon



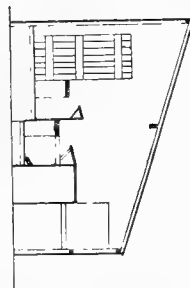
SECTION



HUSTINGS



PLAN OF POLLING BOOTH, built for Coventry election.



SECTION

PLANS OF HUSTINGS AND POLLING BOOTHS—COVENTRY ELECTIONS.

Canadian living, and is illustrated with pretty sketches by Mrs. Staveley Hill, to whom the Member was married in 1876, and by whom he was accompanied on his Canadian tours.

Parliament being dissolved on 26th January, 1874, the addresses of Mr. Samuel Carter and Mr. Henry Mather Jackson appeared in the Coventry papers of the 30th, running upon avowedly Liberal lines. Mr. Gladstone desired to know, should he retain office, that the confidence of the country was with him, and the real issue was whether the government of the kingdom should be conducted on Liberal or Conservative principles. About the same time, Mr. H. W. Eaton's address appeared; whilst declaring the foreign policy of the Government to be weak and pusillanimous, he pronounced Mr. Gladstone's Irish scheme a signal failure. He also alluded to the Elementary Education Act of 1870, Local Taxation, the Income Tax, Permissive Bill, and the County Franchise. The difficulty of finding a second Conservative candidate was got over, and soon after Mr. Frederic Du Pre Thornton came forward. His address, after alluding to Mr. Staveley Hill's withdrawal, was based upon nearly the same lines as Mr. Eaton's, and Conservative in its utterances. Mr. Du Pre Thornton was previously unknown in Coventry, and described by the Conservative organ as a gentleman of independent fortune, of 103, Victoria Street, London, S.W., and East Fieldhouse, Broxbourne, Herts.

Messrs. Carter and Jackson addressed a large Liberal demonstration in the Corn Exchange, which was attended by many local supporters, and held other meetings. Not much was known of Mr. Thornton. He and Mr. Eaton made speeches, but so very little was heard of this gentleman, that the Liberals handbills enquired, "Who is he?" and spoke of a Mr. Du Pre Thornton's connection with the publication of a newspaper called "The Atlas," and of an action tried in the Law Courts thereon, in view to damage the second Conservative candidate's chances at the election; whilst a cartoon appeared entitled "China Organzine; well weighted," a perusal of which will best explain its contents.

The Electors had not long to wait, for almost at the close of Parliament the writs were issued. The passing of the Ballot Act of 1872 substituted secret for open voting, and abolished the public nomination of candidates and declarations of the result of the polling—formalities which at Coventry had long been productive of considerable riot and disorder. The erection of a hustings in Broadgate at election times ceased, and the proceedings at the nomination were henceforward of a semi-private character, held before the Mayor, as Returning Officer, at St. Mary's Hall. At this nomination, Messrs. W. Odell and A. Rotherham nominated both Conservative candidates; Mr. Carter's nominators were Messrs. J. Gulson and W. H. Gardner; whilst those of Mr. Jackson were Messrs. John Rotherham, junr., and L. S. Booth.

The poll commenced at eight o'clock on the morning of 5th February, and closed

at four. It was accompanied by the usual excitement, and the final result was declared at ten to be—

| | | | |
|------------------------------|-----|-----|------|
| H. W. Eaton, Esq. ... | ... | ... | 3823 |
| H. M. Jackson, Esq. ... | ... | ... | 3799 |
| S. Carter, Esq. ... | ... | ... | 3662 |
| F. Du Pre Thornton, Esq. ... | ... | ... | 3628 |

The polling was very close, which, with a Conservative and a Liberal returned, ended by stultifying political representation. For an unknown man, Mr. Thornton polled well, being but 34 behind Mr. Carter, who had been several years before the constituency.

The general result of the elections were a disappointment to the Liberals, and for the first time in nearly thirty years the Conservatives had a majority. Mr. Gladstone resigned, and Mr. Disraeli, in compliance with Her Majesty's demands, undertook the formation of a new Administration.

There were considerable feelings of sympathy with Mr. Carter on his defeat, and a suitable testimonial was presented to him for his services to the Liberal party.

In November, 1874, the Prince and Princess of Wales, the Czarewitch, and a distinguished party, were the guests of the Earl of Aylesford, at Packington Hall. The Mayor (Mr. Alderman Soden) was informed that the Prince and Princess would visit Coventry upon the 7th, on their way to Sandringham. There was considerable display upon the occasion, and the utmost enthusiasm shown. The Royal visitors were received in a pavilion erected upon the Holyhead Road, in which had been arranged many articles of Coventry manufacture for their inspection. They were conducted through the Town, to St. Mary's Hall, wherein a loyal address was presented, to which the Prince replied; and after St. Michael's Church had been visited, the procession, headed by the Mayor, proceeded to the Railway Station. Time, however, being short, the order was given to "trot," to which his Worship, desirous that the Citizens should have a fair view of the Prince and Princess, sent back word, "tell H.R.H. that the Mayor of Coventry never trots." His Worship afterwards gave a banquet, and during the evening the Town was brilliantly illuminated, in honour of the occasion.

Under an Award of 1875, many of the waste strips of commonable land were awarded by the Inclosure Commissioners to, the Corporation as Lords of the Manor, the Freemen for right of herbage, etc., and other persons entitled thereto. Trustees were appointed for the Freemen, and No. 2 Inclosure Trust formed to administer the estate. From the money derived from the sale of the strips, the Trustees purchased a farm at Earlsdon, near the City, and the Freemen have since devoted the proceeds, half-yearly, to Seniority purposes, in like manner with their other incomes.

"The World," of June 7th, 1876, thus describes Coventry's senior Member—

"Society affords no more crucial instance of a gentleman manifestly designed by Providence to raise his order in public estimation, and to gather fresh laurels for the new aristocracy, than the senior Member for Coventry. When the three dread sisters were engaged in weaving in warp and woof the destiny of Mr. Eaton, it was not cotton, one may be sure, which they employed, but silk of the most superfine quality and of the glossiest hue, nor can there be a doubt that since it was ordained that Mr. Eaton should acquire wealth by manufactures, the only material suitable for his attention was that with which the name he bears and the borough he represents are identified. The industrial associations of Coventry are more pleasant than those of Cottonopolis, and it would have been an anomaly that Mr. Henry William Eaton should have lived and died a Manchester man. Good taste and good feeling were as much the birthright of this gentleman as was a modest competence. It is possible that the gifts of a benign and generous nature have been improved by instruction and polished by art. It was Mr. Eaton's good fortune to complete his education at a French college, and to acquire as a young man an extensive and practical knowledge of the best Parisian society. But it is the good fairy which was present at his birth that has enabled Mr. Eaton to derive such advantage as he has done from the opportunities that have waited on him through life. For a happy perception of the duties and responsibilities of his position and a knowledge as sound in practice as it is correct in theory, of the way in which they should be performed, Mr. Eaton is without a rival. Whether in the social or the political world, he comprehends his *métier* and his place. He has been rather more than a decade in the House of Commons; and, on the whole, he may be said to have maintained steadily his reputation as the best-dressed man of that assemblage. If his eloquence is not preserved at any length in the pages of Hansard, his votes have earned for him the gratitude of his party; while the spectacle of his pleasant presence, his genial features, his well-dressed figure, his imperturbable good temper, must have often been as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land, a fountain of freshness springing in the desert, to honourable Members in the midst of dull debates prolonged far into the night. When prosperity is well and gracefully borne, it is always a pleasant spectacle; and of such prosperity Mr. Eaton is the picture. Whether in moments of recreation or business—whether he is metaphorically handling the ribbons at Ascot, or literally at Coventry, in London drawing-room or counting-house, in Parliament or out of it, at sport or play—his good genius never seems to desert this eminent manufacturer of the new school. His reputation is one which has in it nothing that is not enviable. His success in trade has been as great as in society—as honourable as well-earned. He is reported to be as skilful in the calculations of commerce as in the management of his team; and it is certain that his feelings and enthusiasm are as fresh as is the moss rose which seldom fails to grace his buttonhole. There are specific acts in Mr. Eaton's life which deserve to be remembered, and which will be remembered. It is needless to recapitulate the instances of his generosity to the ribbon weavers of Coventry, when their looms were standing still and starvation stared them in the face. Failing to be elected on his first trial at White's, he revenged himself by purchasing the club-house; and he has performed other feats quite in the spirit of a Monte Christo. Fresh, vigorous, clear-headed, with a faculty of enjoyment unimpaired, and the gift to know how rightly to use the good things which the gods give, Mr. Eaton adds by his presence a grace and attraction to society, and is an ideal member of that new aristocracy to which he may well be proud to belong, and which is itself naturally proud to claim him."

Death was busy in the home of the Conservative Member. Mr. Eaton lost his wife in 1877, and his eldest son, Mr. Henry Enderby Eaton, in 1879.

The death of Mr. Samuel Carter took place at London on January 31st, 1878, at the age of 72. Since his last contest at Coventry, he had been for a long time unwell. He was attacked with bronchitis in the spring of 1877, but, spared of all suffering in his last illness, he died without a struggle of simple weakness. The body was removed from London to the residence of the Misses Carter, at Kenilworth, and carried to the family vault in the churchyard there; the funeral being attended by the relatives, friends, and mourners, and a deputation of the leaders of the Liberal party in Coventry.

In February, 1880, Mr. Wheelhouse moved in the House of Commons "for a Select Committee to consider the commercial relations between England and foreign nations, and the effect caused by our system of one-sided, so-called Free Trade." Mr. Eaton spoke in favour of the motion, and was teller for the minority. The motion was opposed by Sir Stafford Northcote, and defeated by 75 to 6.

CHAPTER XCII.

RETURN OF THE LIBERAL CANDIDATES.

Victoria, continued (1880).

Parliament dissolved—A General Election—Mr. Arthur Kekewich and Mr. H. W. Eaton come forward for Conservatives—Account of the former—Sir H. M. Jackson and Mr. William Henry Wills for the Liberals—A blighted hope—Election literature—Arrival of candidates—"Rallies"—Old Blue flags—Speeches—The nomination—Polling day—Incidents—Final result—Return of Messrs. Jackson and Wills—The Conservative defeat—Biography of Mr. W. H. Wills—"A Tale of Terror"—Resignation of Conservative Ministry—Formation of a Liberal one.



AFTER sitting for over six years, Parliament was dissolved on the 24th March, 1880, when the Coventry Conservatives induced Mr. Arthur Kekewich, Q.C., of "16, Park Crescent, Portland Place, Middlesex," to become their candidate, with Mr. Eaton. He was a barrister in good practice, and subsequently became Mr. Justice Kekewich. Coming from a Devonshire family, he was tall, a good speaker, and looked upon as well fitted to supply the place of Mr. A. S. Hill.

The Liberal party brought forward two candidates in the persons of the old Member, Sir H. M. Jackson; who had succeeded to the Baronetcy on the death of his father; and Mr. William Henry Wills, of Frognall Rise, Hampstead. It had been the expectation of the Conservative party that Sir Henry would have retired from Coventry, and contested the second seat for East Derbyshire, after his speech and vote on Mr. Wheelhouse's motion to consider the operations of the French Treaty and its effects on the wages and employment of the artisans, but they were mistaken. Again long addresses from the candidates appeared in the local papers, each dilating according to his party views upon various topics of Parliamentary and local and foreign matters. Less political literature than usual appeared. "What the Conservatives have done recently: facts are stubborn things," was stated in a handbill. That side issued a cartoon, "Specimen Member of the Liberal Party," having pointed allusion to Mr. Wills as a follower of Mr. Gladstone; and their party had a peculiar song to the tune of "Marching home again," the first verse of which tells—

"Now for Eaton and Kekewich cheer again,
Hurrah, hurrah!
They are the choice of Coventry men,
Hurrah, hurrah!
They're useful men, and sense don't lack,
And the flag they hoist is the Union Jack;
So we'll all feel gay with these men leading on."



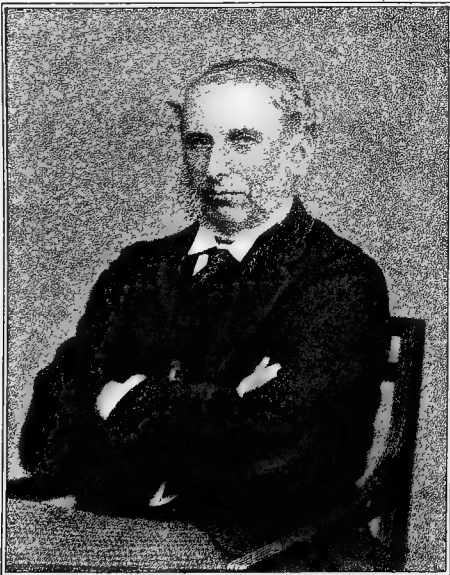
Alex Staveley Hill

ALEXANDER STAVELEY HILL, Esq., Q.C.,
M.P. for Coventry, 1868.



W. H. Wills

WILLIAM HENRY WILLS, Esq.,
(AFTERWARDS SIR W. H. WILLS, BART.),
M.P. for Coventry, 1880.



Arthur Kekewich

ARTHUR KEKEWICH, Esq., Q.C.
(AFTERWARDS MR. JUSTICE KEKEWICH),
Parliamentary Candidate for Coventry, 1880.
(From a Photograph by Mr. A. J. Melhuish, 12 Old Bond Street, W.)



Ughtred Kay-Shuttleworth

SIR UGHTRED JAMES KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH, BART.,
Parliamentary Candidate for Coventry, 1881.
(From a Photograph by Messrs. Byrne & Co., Richmond.)

Amongst the Liberal handbills was a clever and amusing one, entitled "The Tory Procession, 1880," representing the chief members of that party under assumed names.

Both parties soon were in the thick of the political fever, and a large Conservative meeting in the Corn Exchange went off with great harmony and enthusiasm. The candidates, on their arrival in the City, were met by large bodies of their supporters at the Railway Station, and "rallied" the Town. They were quickly at work canvassing, and speaking at various meetings throughout the wards and out-districts, aided by their friends and partisans. There was a good deal of handbill squibbing going on, and one headed "Speech by Sir Henry Jackson's brother," which contained an account of certain proceedings in connection with the Liberal candidature for East Derbyshire, and of a deputation which during the election waited upon Sir Henry, when he declined their invitation to contest for that county. At the head of the Liberal "rally," or procession, the old Blue flag of the Whig party was carried, with the well-known name "Ellice" in gold letters thereon; whilst another banner, recalling the struggles of a past period, bore the inscription, "Stoke old Blues: Ellice and Independence."

Speech-making to a very considerable amount occupied the attentive electorate through the somewhat dreary and blustering March weather. The agitation of Home Rule for Ireland was to the fore. Much was uttered at Coventry on this and other topics, until the nomination day, which took place on Tuesday. Mr. Eaton's proposers were Messrs. James Maycock and Edward Lynes; those of Mr. Kekewich, Messrs. Robert Arnold Dalton and William Odell, junior; whilst, true to their early love, Messrs. John Gulson and Laurence Saunders Booth proposed and seconded Sir Henry Jackson; and Messrs. R. Caldicott and G. H. Hayward were the proposers of Mr. Wills.

The polling took place on Wednesday, 31st March, and very early small crowds paraded the streets, shouting the names of their favourite candidates. The party organizations were set to work, and in the grey dawn of a gloomy morning slumberers were disturbed by the rolling of cabs and other vehicles driving to the committee rooms, where they were decorated with placards. When eight o'clock arrived, and the polling places opened, there was a rush for the poll, and throughout the day the keenest competition was manifest between the rival parties in Gosford, Spon, and Whitefriars Wards, where the Conservatives had great influence. Between twelve and one the excitement was intense, but in the afternoon it somewhat flagged. It became noticeable that the Liberal organization was in advance of that of the Conservative, and that the Ballot had materially reduced the amount of rowdiness. It was a costly election, and, rumour said, would be "go as you please," without fear of petition. At the close of the poll, when the ballot boxes had been removed to St. Mary's Hall, Liberals and Conservatives alike believed they were successful. The counting of the ballot papers commenced soon after four, and shortly after half-past eight, the Mayor announced the result to be—

| | | | | |
|----------|-----|-----|-----|------|
| Jackson | ... | ... | ... | 4184 |
| Wills | ... | ... | ... | 4105 |
| Eaton | ... | ... | ... | 4008 |
| Kekewich | ... | ... | ... | 3715 |

The new Members,

MESSRS. H. M. JACKSON AND W. H. WILLS,

addressed their friends from the Queen's Hotel, and the result was telegraphed to Macclesfield, where Mr. W. M. Eaton, a son of the late Member, was contesting that borough in the Conservative interest. By the election the Liberals won a seat. The result was keenly felt by the Conservatives, but they bore it with very good grace, and both their candidates cordially acknowledged the services of all who had helped them.

Mr. W. H. Wills was the head of the celebrated house of W. D. and H. O. Wills, tobacco manufacturers, of "Bristol Bird's Eye" fame, and the "Daily Mail" remarked: "Mr. Wills has seen a great deal of 'returns' in his life, but no returns so agreeable as those he saw last night at the declaration of the poll. Now that he represents Coventry, instead of calling one of his celebrated tobaccos 'The Three Castles,' he should call it 'The Three Spires.'" During the election it had been said that Mr. Wills was likely to start a tobacco manufactory in Coventry, and there were some who believed the rumour, which, however, never came to anything. Mr. Wills had residences at Coombe Lodge, Blagdon, Somersetshire, and at Frognall Rise, Hampstead, and was the only surviving son of Mr. Day Wills, of Bristol, by his marriage with Mary, third daughter of Mr. Robert Steven, of Camberwell, Surrey. Born in 1830, he was now 50 years of age, and had received his education at Mill Hill Grammar School, and University College, London. He was a Bristol Magistrate, and served the office of High Sheriff for the city and county in 1877-8. He became chosen an Alderman of Bristol, where his family are largely engaged in mercantile pursuits, and was a Dissenter. Mr. Wills married, in 1853, Elizabeth, youngest daughter of the late Mr. John Stancomb, J.P., of Trowbridge, Wiltshire. From the remarks in the "Tobacco Trade Review" for April following the election, it was expected that the new supporter of Lord Hartington would endeavour in Parliament to obtain an alteration in the vexed duties on tobacco, and other matters, required to accomplish a reform in the trade. "The Coventry Herald," of April 16th, has the following curious verses, entitled "A Tale of Terror"—

"*Black Jack* he was a warrior,
 Full valiant and full bold,
 He goeth to the contest forth,
 Like errant knight of old;
Three Castles bears he on his shield,
 Now whither shall he go?
 Or East, or West, or North, or South?
 His course is *Westward Ho!*
 Soon cometh he to Coventry,
 Where burghers bold await
 What time the gallant fearless knight
 Arriveth there in state;
 Anon he comes,—Bang,—Liberal drums;
 Burn, patriotic fires;
 Before the proud *Three Castles*
 Bend low, ye triple spires!

Now rages war from door to door,
 By noon, by night, by day;
 And speeches hissed, and babies kissed,
 Attest the varying fray.
 Of *Bristol Mixture* in his speech,
 And *Genuine Irish*, too;
Coarse Cut and *Turkey* enter there,
 But little *Honey Dew*.

Now foremost leads the man of deeds,
 Like Nares, towards the poll,
 Where Liberal thousands after crowd—
 A *Genuine Bristol Roll*.
 At night he rests him from the fray,
 High hope within him burns,
 Till 'suaged and soothed, ere break of day,
 By glorious *Bright Returns*!

You'll ne'er refuse my rhyming muse,
 Your meed where praise is due,
 While Bristol sons receive him home
 With hearty cheers and true.
 Let Whig and Tory praises blend,
 Brave hearts admire brave men,
 And since we've seen you once, *Old Friend*,
 We trust you'll *Come Again*."

The majority of the House being adverse, the Earl of Beaconsfield's Ministry resigned, and was succeeded by Mr. Gladstone's Government.



KING'S HEAD HOTEL, COVENTRY: HEAD-QUARTERS OF
 MR. HENRY WILLIAM EATON, M.P., 1886.

CHAPTER XCIII.

A TORY VICTORY.

Victoria, continued (1881).

Sir H. M. Jackson offered, and accepts, a Judgeship—Liberal party, and another candidate—Mr. Eaton comes forward again for the Conservatives—Sir U. J. Kay-Shuttleworth, Bart., for the Liberals—Account of him—A new writ moved for Coventry—Sudden death of Sir H. M. Jackson—His funeral—Conservative activity—Correspondence—The Irish Home Rulers at Coventry—Mr. C. S. Parnell's manifesto—They support Mr. Eaton—Their meeting at the Corn Exchange—Disturbed by the Liberals—Great confusion—Retaliation by the Tory mob—Mr. A. O'Connor, M.P., at the Craven Arms, and the Press—A handbill—The nomination—Scenes on the polling day—The Coventry mobs and the Birmingham police—Irishmen poll solid for Mr. Eaton—The numbers—Member and Candidate return thanks—The Irish organization and the Conservative candidate—Mr. H. W. Eaton elected—Takes his seat in the House.



EARLY in March, Sir H. M. Jackson was offered, and accepted, a Judgeship, an event which was promptly communicated to the Liberal leaders in Coventry. It was announced that he was out of health and confined to his bed, but hopes for the better were entertained. Since becoming a Queen's Counsel in 1873, he had practised in the Court of Vice-Chancellor Bacon, where he and Mr. Kay had been retained in the most important cases. It was felt that Sir Henry would fully justify the Chancellor's selection, but that Coventry would lose an able representative and the House of Commons a Member who never spoke for effect, or seldom took part in debate without contributing solid information or weighty suggestions. His interest in the trades of the City was especially shown by an endeavour to reform the hall-marking of watches, and by presiding over a Select Committee of the House to consider the question.

The Liberal party were bent on securing another candidate, and various names were suggested, including those of Sir Fowell Buxton, Alderman Chamberlain, Mr. Waddy, Q.C., and Mr. Plimsoll. The Conservatives applied to Mr. Eaton, who had, since his defeat, severed many of his personal connections at Coventry, and desired that his name should be absent from those lists to which he formerly largely contributed, but he now proved true to the Town, and consented to again contest the City. He issued an address, promptly came down, and was unanimously accepted by the party, commencing the usual electioneering, canvassing, and speech-making, in which he was assisted by Mr. A. S. Hill, and his son, Colonel Eaton. In the meantime, the leaders of the

Liberal party secured Sir Ughtred James Kay-Shuttleworth, Bart., of Gawthorpe Hall, Burnley, Lancashire, as their candidate. He was the son of the late Sir J. P. Kay-Shuttleworth, one of the most zealous educational reformers of his day, and Vice-Chairman of the relief fund during the great cotton famine. Sir Ughtred was born in 1844; he unsuccessfully contested North-East Lancashire in 1868, but had been returned for Hastings in 1869. He showed inherited interest in education during the discussions of the Act of 1870 and subsequently, and had identified himself with the Municipal Reform League. He was about thirty-seven years of age, and a good speaker, but at the last General Election had been rejected at Hastings. He issued his address on the 5th, was accepted, and forthwith commenced his political campaign. Amongst his speakers at Coventry were Mr. R. Fort, M.P., and Mr. W. H. Wills, M.P., together with Mr. A. H. Pears and others.

On Monday evening, Lord Richard Grosvenor, in the House of Commons, moved for a new writ to be issued for Coventry, but the next day both parties in the City were dismayed by receiving the startling intelligence of the sudden death of Sir Henry Mather Jackson, who, gazetted as one of Her Majesty's Judges in the High Court of Justice, had not been destined to fulfil the position. Sir Henry was suffering from stone, but it had never been anticipated that the painful disease would have proved fatal. He died on the 8th March, amidst the regrets not only of Liberals, but of numerous Conservatives in Coventry, with whom he had grown popular. The funeral took place on Monday, 14th, in Flaybrick Hill Cemetery, Birkenhead, and was attended by the family and friends of the deceased, and various gentlemen from Coventry.

As the time progressed, it became evident that the Conservative party, smarting under their last defeat, were determined to poll every man they were able. The reasons of Sir U. Shuttleworth's rejection at Lancashire and Hastings were placarded before the constituency, as were his actions and opinions upon local option; and the feelings of the licensed victuallers were wrought upon. A correspondence occurred between the candidates respecting the conduct of the election, with a view to limit the expenditure, and in order to contest the seat upon principles of strictest purity. The Irish Home Rulers of Coventry now sided with the Conservatives, as the Liberals had a short time previously introduced a measure for the repression of crime in Ireland, and on Thursday night, under the instructions of the chiefs of the Home Rule party, the Secretary of the Home Rule Confederation arrived in Coventry to organize the Irish voters in the City in favour of the Conservative candidate. The next morning a manifesto appeared in the London papers from their leader, Mr. Charles Stewart Parnell, recommending the Irish to abstain from voting for the Whig candidate, and to support Mr. Eaton. Mr. A. O'Connor, M.P., and Mr. J. L. Finagan, M.P., arrived in the City, and were announced to hold a meeting at the Corn Exchange in the evening. At the time appointed, the place "was occupied by a large number of Irish Electors, Conservatives, Liberal roughs,

Brummagem machinists, and some members of the light-fingered brigade." On the Chairman announcing the appearance of the gentlemen, there was a tremendous amount of mixed catcalling and cheers. Fights were plentiful, and the combatants were encouraged by the by-standers until separated by the police. Amidst a torrent of yells and groans, Mr. O'Donnell proposed a resolution pledging the Irishmen to oppose the candidature of Sir U. K. Shuttleworth, which Mr. Hennessey seconded in dumb show. Mr. O'Connor, M.P., rose to speak, but so great was the uproar that he could barely make himself audible to the reporters, who had left their seats and clambered for safety on to the platform. At this juncture the roughs commenced smashing the chairs, and using the pieces as bludgeons; seats were thrown about in all directions, and the roughs stormed the platform, amidst a scene of the greatest confusion. Hats were smashed, heads broken, and indiscriminate fighting reigned supreme. Meanwhile, the Irish Members and their supporters had left the stage and the hall to the mob, which, consisting as it did of both political parties, struggled, shouted, raved, and fought for possession of the platform. Several men attempted to take the chair, with the result that different meetings went on at the same time, the speakers holding forth until knocked or pulled down by others. At length the hall was cleared by the police, under their Chief, Mr. J. Norris, whose good humour and tact were conspicuous. Some of the Conservative roughs, after leaving the Corn Exchange, marched to the British School, in King Street, where the Liberal candidate was addressing a meeting, and stormed the building in retaliation. Sir Ughtred and his principal supporters managed to effect an exit, but the mob took possession of the room, smashed the windows, and demolished the furniture. "Until a very late hour the streets were in a state of very violent commotion, and many a man went home with a symptom of his partisanship in the shape of a cut head or a black eye." After the Exchange meeting, Mr. O'Connor, M.P., addressed the representatives of the Press at the Craven Arms, and subsequently the following placard was issued—"Irishmen of Coventry. The Whig rowdyism at the Corn Exchange is quite on a par with the Government Coercion Policy. Force and fraud are its weapons. Vote against Shuttleworth Vote for Eaton. Vote against Coercion. Support the national policy of Charles Stewart Parnell, M.P. We are, yours faithfully, fellow-countrymen, J. L. Finagan, M.P., A. O'Connor, M.P., W. Hogan, F. Byrne."

The nomination took place on Friday, at St. Mary's Hall, when Mr. William Odell proposed, and Mr. R. A. Dalton seconded, Mr. H. W. Eaton. Sir U. K. Shuttleworth was nominated by Mr. R. Caldicott, and seconded by Mr. J. Worwood.

On the polling day, 12th March, at an early hour in the morning, vehicles of one description or another drove about with blue placards of varying shades inviting Electors to vote for one or other of the candidates, whilst the committee rooms were equally conspicuous by the blue literature stuck upon the outside walls. The wearing of light

and dark Blue favours was pretty general, and the partisans of either side were seen swarming in and out of the committee rooms like bees. During the morning excitement manifested itself in some good-humoured rough play, and a large number of people congregated in Broadgate, whilst eager partisans thronged the approaches to the Queen's and the King's Head Hotels, the head-quarters of the rival candidates.

The polling went on steadily till the close at four. During the afternoon the mob collected in Hertford Street, and continued its usual diversion of hustling and bonneting. The Birmingham police, under Major Bond, stationed in front of the Queen's Hotel, were apparently unused to that sort of thing, and one of them began to ply his staff in a manner not in accordance with Coventry notions. At the time, the Liberal mob in front of the Queen's, and the Conservative before the King's Head, were displaying their pugilistic talents. A man near the Corn Exchange, seeing what the police were doing, cried out, "Stone them." There were not wanting willing hands to do so, and in an instant both belligerent mobs became friends; stones were thrown at the police, who had to retreat into the Queen's Hotel, and the Birmingham contingent hastily left the Town. The Irish Electors numbered about 200, and it was thought they would poll for Mr. Eaton to within half-a-dozen, so that his supporters believed he had a majority of 300 at the close of the poll. The votes having been counted at St. Mary's Hall, the Mayor (H. Matterson, Esq.,) announced the numbers to be as follows—

| | | | |
|------------------------|-----|-----|------|
| Mr. H. W. Eaton ... | ... | ... | 4011 |
| Sir U. K. Shuttleworth | ... | ... | 3568 |
| Majority for Mr. Eaton | | | 443 |

The result having been communicated from the King's Head balcony to the vast crowd in Hertford Street, Mr. Eaton stepped forward, and, amidst cheers, returned thanks for his election. Sir Ughtred also, from the Queen's Hotel, thanked his supporters for the assistance they had afforded him. After the declaration of the poll, a deputation of the local Irish organization informed Mr. Eaton that he must not consider that because they supported him they were imbued with Conservative principles. They were neither Conservatives nor Liberals, but were, before all other things, Irishmen! They did not wish to take the credit for so large a majority, but out of a possible 198 Irish votes, they had registered 194 in his favour.

MR. HENRY WILLIAM EATON


took his oath and seat in the House of Commons the next day, being introduced by Mr. Newdegate and Mr. Staveley Hill, amidst loud Opposition cheers, in which the Home Rule Members took part.

CHAPTER XCIV.

THE LOSS OF A MEMBER: THE CONSERVATIVE RE-ELECTED.

Victoria, continued (1882 to 1885).

New hotels built—Parties and clubs—Lord Wolmer, the second Liberal candidate—Sir Henry A. Hoare, Bart., the Conservative second candidate—Account of them—Extinction of the Holy Trinity Vicar's Rate—Local acts and purchases—The restoration of St. Michael's Church—Coventry loses a Member—Withdrawal of Lord Wolmer and Sir Henry A. Hoare—Resignation of Mr. Wills—Mr. T. C. T. Warner comes forward for the Liberals—Parliament ends—Preparation for the polling at Coventry—Conservative meeting at the Corn Exchange—Liberal sessions—Progress of the election—The nomination of candidates—The polling day—Mr. H. W. Eaton re-elected.

HE want of further hotel accommodation for the Liberal party in Coventry caused the starting of a Company to build a new one. They purchased the Red Lion Inn premises, in Hertford Street, and the Queen's Hotel had been erected at this time. Closely following, the old King's Head, with some other premises at the corner of Hertford Street and Smithford Street, were pulled down, and a new hotel built on the site by Mr. George Woodcock, a part of which was opened at Christmas, 1879. Mr. Eaton made this his head-quarters when in Coventry, and the house continued to be a Conservative rendezvous.

With parties so evenly balanced, the perfecting of organization and registration became a question of importance. The Conservatives, requiring better club premises, secured rooms at the old Castle Hotel, in Broadgate, which were formally opened as a club on the 6th May, 1882, before which time their club was in Little Park Street, and was the successor of that on the Burgess, known to their opponents as the "dark entry." The Liberal Club had been started about 1873, when the party was a little down on its luck; at first it was situate on premises near the Dolphin Inn, Market Place, and then in Hertford Street. Afterwards an organization was formed of the "150," which the Conservatives dubbed "the Caucus." The opening of the Reform Club took place on the 27th February, 1883.

The Liberals were on the look-out for a second candidate, and in February, 1883, the name of Lord Wolmer, the eldest son of Earl Selborne, Lord Chancellor, was mentioned; his Lordship being adopted at a meeting of the party at the Queen's Hotel on the 9th. For some time he had been the private secretary of Mr. Childers, formerly Secretary of State for War, and now Chancellor of the Exchequer. In March

following, Sir Henry Ainslie Hoare, Bart., consented to become the second Conservative candidate, and was adopted by that party in Coventry. He sat in the Parliament which terminated in 1874, as a Liberal, with Sir Charles Dilke, for Chelsea, but at the General Election in that year was defeated, and subsequently became a Conservative. The parties held meetings at the Corn Exchange and elsewhere, and whilst "Wills and Wolmer" became the cry of one side, that of "Eaton and Hoare" was taken up on the other.

The payment of Vicars Rates had long caused annoyance to the Coventry Nonconformists and others. At this time, by the energy of the Mayor, Mr. A. S. Tomson, and those interested, a voluntary fund of about £4,000 was raised. A Bill was obtained in 1883 for the abolition of the rate in Holy Trinity Parish, and for providing the Vicar a stipend of £500 a year from the Trinity Church Estate, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners promising to augment it by £100 per annum. The extinction of the impost in St. Michael's Parish was, unfortunately, not brought to an issue.

In February, 1884, the Coventry Gas Company sought to obtain a new Bill in Parliament, but by an agreement of 25th March, 1884, the Coventry Corporation purchased the Gas Works and business, and entered upon them in July. They applied to Parliament for an Act with power to purchase; the expenditure involved in the purchase of the Gas Works being £168,000. On the 2nd May, 1884, Mr. Wills spoke on the Budget and the Tobacco Duty.

The following Bills were about this time passed: Coventry Provisional Order Bill, to empower the Corporation to take lands for the construction and maintenance of a Cemetery; Coventry Corporation (Gas Purchase) Bill; and subsequently the Coventry and District Tramway Bill.

A scheme for the restoration of St. Michael's Church was launched, and at a meeting at St. Mary's Hall, the estimate of cost of the restoration was said to be £35,000, of which Mr. George Woodcock offered £10,000 on conditions, one being that a further sum of £20,000 (payable in five years) be guaranteed within twelve months. The work was commenced in May, 1885, and the Church reopened in 1890.

The new Reform Act extended household suffrage to the Counties, whilst the Redistribution Bill which followed deprived Boroughs under 50,000, including Coventry, with its population of 47,366 and an electorate of 9,028, of one of its Members. The representatives, and the City Council, endeavoured to stay the loss; but the nearness of the population to the limit, and the length of time Coventry had returned Members, were of no avail, and their efforts became unsuccessful.

Sir Henry Hoare on the one side, and Lord Wolmer on the other, withdrew, whilst the resignation of Mr. Wills caused the Liberal party to search for another candidate. In July the names of several gentleman, including Alderman Gulson, Alderman Tomson, and a son of the late Sir H. M. Jackson, were mentioned, but

shortly afterwards that of Mr. Thomas Courtenay Theydon Warner, of 18, Charles Street, Berkeley Square, London, and Highams, Essex, was submitted to, and accepted by, the Liberal Association as their candidate for the ensuing election. Mr. Warner was the son of Mr. Edward Warner, Liberal Member for Norwich, born in 1857, and had been educated at Eton and Oxford. He married, in 1883, Leucha Dina, daughter of Viscount Hawarden, and had identified himself with the interests of the people, whilst supporting the leading measures of the Liberal programme. Mr. Warner took up his quarters at the Queen's Hotel, and, by his own and wife's good qualities, soon became popular with the Electors, holding a series of meetings in the various districts of the City and neighbourhood. In June the Government resigned, being defeated on the Budget Bill, and the Marquis of Salisbury formed a Ministry.

Parliament being at an end, in November, 1885, parties at Coventry were promptly in motion, and Mr. Eaton's and Mr. Warner's addresses appeared. The writ was received on the 19th, and the 23rd fixed for the day of nomination, with the polling on Tuesday, 24th. The Conservatives held a demonstration at the Corn Exchange, where speeches were delivered by Lord Dunraven, Mr. Eaton, Mr. George Woodcock (the President of the Conservative Association), and others. A few moderate Liberals at Coventry were dissatisfied with Radical policy, and at this time one or more secessions from that party ensued.

The election was not productive of much humour, but the poetic spirit of a past century had not quite died out, the Liberals having a verse—

"Welcome Warner home,
Welcome Warner home,
The dark Blue lads shall carry the flags,
And welcome Warner home,"

which they sang when accompanying their candidate in his perambulations. The Conservatives had a song, the first verse of which was—

"I shall vote for Eaton,
He's the man for me,
And he shall go to Parliament
Again for Coventry.
We've tried him often in the past,
In time that's gone before,
And he has proved a trusty friend
To us and to the poor,"

repeating the first four lines by way of chorus; but the verse above, substituting the name of Eaton for that of Warner, and the word "light" for "dark," was more popular with them.

Either candidate had two sets of nominators and assentors, Mr. Eaton's nomination papers being signed by Messrs. George Woodcock and Robert Arnold Dalton, and Francis Wyley and J. E. Morton, respectively; and those of Mr. Warner by Messrs. A. S. Tomson and W. S. Eales, and H. S. Read and John Atkins.

The polling took place on the 24th. There were nineteen polling stations, but little excitement, in consequence of a heavy downpour of rain. Many of the shops and business establishments were partially closed, and windows boarded up, in case of rowdiness; whilst drafts of police from Nottingham and Warwick County, in addition to those of Coventry and a large number of special constables, patrolled the streets. The poll opened briskly at eight, and the voting went on quietly. Vehicles were used by both parties, and the women and children made a brave show of party colours from doorsteps and entry ends. The Conservatives all along the line were busy, and the Liberal voters of Earlsdon, some sixty or seventy, marched, with Mr. Warner at their head, to their polling place at St. Mary's Hall, whilst at Stoke a majority of Electors was stated to have been secured for the Liberal candidate. In the dinner-hour the polling became busy, and voters were brought from the factories; but in the afternoon it flagged. The contest was fought with good feeling amongst the workers, but towards evening several fights occurred in the streets. The Liberals had many voluntary helpers, but the Conservative organization was much in advance. It was considered that a large poll had been taken, and whilst the counting of votes was going on at St. Mary's Hall, the Liberals believed that Mr. Warner had won; but shortly after eleven, the Mayor (Alderman Maycock) declared

MR. HENRY WILLIAM EATON

duly elected, and subsequently informed the Press that the exact figures could not then be made known, as there was a slight discrepancy of thirteen between the number of ballot papers and the total votes; but the figures eventually announced were—

| | | | |
|---------------------------|-----|-----|------|
| H. W. Eaton, Esq. ... | ... | ... | 4577 |
| T. C. T. Warner, Esq. ... | ... | ... | 4328 |
| Majority for Mr. Eaton | ... | ... | 249 |

There were 9,736 voters on the register, of whom 8,959 polled. Quickly the news was brought to the King's Head, where Mr. Eaton, from the balcony, thanked the Electors for his re-election, and Mr. Warner from the Queen's Hotel for the support he had received. After some speech-making, excited crowds filled the streets, and it was not until midnight that the City became quiet.

In the elections, Sir U. K. Shuttleworth was chosen by a great majority in the Clitheroe Division of Lancashire, and Lord Wolmer for the Petersfield Division of Hampshire, but both Mr. Wills and Sir Henry Hoare sustained defeats. Mr. Gladstone caused it to be known that he was prepared to introduce a Home Rule measure for Ireland, and returned to office in February, 1886.

CHAPTER XCV.

UNION OR HOME RULE?

Victoria, continued (1886).

Divisions in the Liberal ranks—Gladstonian Liberals and Liberal Unionists—Rejection of Mr. Gladstone's Irish Home Rule Bill—Mr. Eaton's vote—The Government appeal—A General Election—Manifestoes—Mr. Eaton's address and the Home Rule question—Local disagreements—Mr. C. Warner's withdrawal—Liberals unprepared—Proposed candidates—Mr. W. H. W. Ballantine comes forward—Is accepted by the Liberals—His address as to the Irish question—Mr. Eaton's reception—Activity of the candidates—Arrival of the writ—The Irish vote—"How should Liberals vote?"—Conservative and the Liberal Unionist vote—"The Herald's" description of the election—Nomination—Polling day, as told by "the Standard"—Counting the ballot papers—Mr. Eaton elected—His increased majority—Mr. Gladstone's resignation—Formation of Lord Salisbury's Government.



MR. GLADSTONE'S sympathies with Irish Home Rule were steadily disuniting the Liberal party, who branched into Gladstonian Liberals, siding for Home Rule being given to Ireland, and Liberal Unionists, favouring the retention of Parliament at Westminster. In June, 1886, the gravity of the crisis created by the Home Rule Bill became apparent, for, with a considerable majority in the Commons against the Bill, the measure was defeated by thirty votes (Mr. Eaton voting with the majority). The most powerful opponents to the Bill had sat with the Prime Minister in the same Cabinet, and whilst Lord Hartington moved the amendment to the Government proposals, Mr. Joseph Chamberlain strongly opposed the measure, and Mr. John Bright went into the Opposition lobby against Mr. Gladstone. An appeal to the country was necessary, Parliament dissolved, and a General Election ensued. Letters and speeches of the leaders of the parties appeared, and the question at issue was for Union, or Home Rule for Ireland.

Mr. Eaton's address appeared on the 16th. Whilst considering it necessary, for the safety of the Kingdom, that the Imperial Parliament should remain supreme, he was, subject to that condition, willing to extend to Ireland a similar measure of local self-government as should be advisable for England and Scotland; and not believing in the disintegration of Parliament, he said—

"The setting up of a rival Parliament in Dublin, with restrictions on its action, would in practice be found galling and irritating, yet powerless to restrain, could only lead eventually to total *Separation*, a result certain to prove injurious to *Great Britain* and disastrous to *Ireland*. To *Ireland* it would mean the withdrawal of capital, loss of employment to her working population,

and general stagnation. To *England* it would bring an influx of Irishmen into our towns and villages, to compete with our own artisans and labourers. At a time when the necessity of drawing closer to us our Colonies, and welding our enormous Empire into a more compact mould, is commending itself more and more to far-seeing Statesmen, it would surely be the height of folly to commence the process of disintegration at our own doors."

Local disagreement manifested itself against Home Rule. The Liberal Club had passed a resolution in its favour, and in April, the late President of the Club publicly expressed his disagreement therewith, whilst other Liberals were wavering or privately expressing disapproval, but their separation was not effected without a struggle, or hastily and without thought. Mr. Courtenay Warner also finding that his views upon the subject were out of harmony with those of the majority of the Liberal Association, informed the party that it was not his intention to contest the City at the coming election, and at first it was thought there would be no opposition to Mr. Eaton, but eventually, after the names of a popular local Alderman, Mr. John Fell (Mayor of Leamington), and Mr. R. P. Blennerhassett, of London, who contested North-East Manchester at the last election, had been mentioned, Mr. William Henry Walter Ballantine was interviewed, and, on coming to the City, accepted by the Liberals and adopted as their candidate. Mr. Ballantine, in his address, issued on the 26th June, spoke of the unanimous invitation of the Coventry Liberal Association to him, and explained his views regarding the Irish Home Rule question, and trusted that the Electors would give their votes in favour of conciliation and in support of Mr. Gladstone, promising that, if elected, his constant endeavour should be to promote the interests of the ancient and important City of Coventry.

Meanwhile, Mr. Eaton was everywhere well received in the City, and at a large Conservative demonstration in the Corn Exchange, presided over by Mr. W. F. Wyley, a unanimous vote of confidence was passed in his favour. Mr. Ballantine, although a stranger, soon became known, and attended meetings in the various districts, or visited numerous factories and workshops, explaining his views.

On Sunday morning the acting Postmaster, Mr. W. Ward, handed the Mayor (Mr. Alderman Maycock) the writ for holding the Coventry election, whereupon his Worship fixed Thursday, the 1st July, for the nomination, and Friday, the 2nd, for the polling.

The Irish Electors met Mr. E. Harrington, ex-M.P. for West Kerry, at the Queen's Hotel, and a resolution was passed pledging the meeting to use its best endeavours to return Mr. Ballantine. It was obvious that some of the Liberals would not vote, or, out of sympathy with the policy of the greater leaders in the House of Commons, turn towards the Conservative candidate. "How should Liberals vote?" asked the leading paper of their party, to which it was replied: "In this General Election, Liberals must vote or abstain from voting, as they are persuaded in their own minds. Allegiance to the Ministry is not the criterion of political orthodoxy."

The Conservatives, anxious to secure the Liberal Unionist vote, published Lord Hartington's advice at Glasgow to poll for the Unionist candidate, irrespective of any other political qualification. "*The Coventry Herald*" thus describes this election—

"The contest was generally regarded as an unequal one, though there were not wanting expectations that some new situations would be developed, arising out of the Irish question. Nevertheless, the outlook so far as the Liberals were concerned was not very encouraging; Mr. Ballantine had only been a week in the field, while Mr. Eaton had a commercial, Parliamentary, and territorial connection with the City for upwards of twenty years. The Conservative party were enthusiastic in support of 'their old friend,' and in a good state of organization; on the other hand, the Liberals were notoriously wanting in unity, there being many dissentients from the policy of Mr. Gladstone, of which Mr. Ballantine was a supporter—sympathizers with Mr. Chamberlain on the one hand, and of the Marquis of Hartington on the other, not feeling able to any large extent to overcome their scruples, and to vote solidly with the main bulk of their party against a Conservative. Several gentlemen resigned, for the time being, positions of usefulness in the party; others openly avowed their intention to vote for Mr. Eaton, and were to be seen at his meetings. Despite the odds against him, Mr. Ballantine fought pluckily; great energy was shown by those having charge of the arrangements, and the contest, though keen, was characterized by good humour and a general absence of those unscrupulous tactics which too often prevail. At the General Election in November last, the Conservative majority was really 261, though the official return was 249. To this was to be added the Liberal abstentions and opposition, and also the losses which arose from no Liberal canvass having been made, a proportion of votes always being given on personal grounds. A gross total was thus arrived at which few could have been sanguine enough to expect would be outnumbered by the voting of the Irish voters. The latter was an unknown quantity. It was generally admitted that it was to the Irish vote that Mr. Eaton owed his re-election in 1881—he was then styled the Home Rule Member for Coventry—and that the Irish vote turned the scale in his favour last November. It was urged by the local Irish leaders that it would make a difference on the poll of 500, there being, according to their own data, upwards of 250 who supported Mr. Eaton who would on this occasion vote for Mr. Gladstone's candidate and 'Justice to Ireland.' The polling therefore commenced with some certainty of victory on the Conservative side, and on the Liberal side with much fear that the unusual difficulties could scarcely be overcome, but with a vague hope 'that fortune would favour the brave,' and a belief that victory might be possible."

The nomination of candidates took place at St. Mary's Hall on July 1st. Mr. Ballantine was proposed by Alderman Tomson and seconded by Alderman Banks, and he had a second nomination; Mr. Eaton was proposed by Mr. Alexander Rotherham and seconded by Dr. Lynes; he also handed in a second nomination.

The story of the polling day (2nd July) is thus told by the "*Coventry Standard*"—

"Despite the importance of the struggle—certainly the most important yet witnessed by this generation—there were (until night) but few outward evidences of the battle which was waged in Coventry on Friday. A stranger passing through the Town would hardly have noticed any signs different from those of an ordinary market day. The principal streets of the City were thronged, as usual, with vehicles and pedestrians, but very few of the former were engaged in bringing voters to the poll, and scarcely any of the latter displayed party colours. Both candidates were busy driving about during the day, and from the receptions which were accorded them, it was easy to say which represented the popular cause. Of mural literature there was but a very meagre quantity. The addresses of the candidates and the injunctions to poll early for one or other composed the bulk of the placards exhibited. At the last moment the Separationists got out a bill, which asserted that Mr. Bright was going to vote for Mr. Potter, the Gladstonian candidate for Rochdale, and which also contained an extract from an old speech by Mr. Chamberlain. But the Conservatives soon put the matter right by posting a placard with Mr. Bright's telegraphic denial of the lie about him, and with the latest expression of opinion from Mr. Chamberlain, recommending opposition to Separationists. At the (19) polling stations the voting commenced quietly, and proceeded through the day with the same calmness, only being accelerated during the dinner hour and in the evening, when the heat of the sun was less intense."

The poll closed at eight o'clock, when it was felt by both sides that it would not be large. The ballot boxes were opened at St. Mary's Hall, where the enumerators commenced counting the papers, and at a quarter-past eleven the Mayor (Alderman Maycock) announced the figures to be—

| | | | | |
|-------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-------------|
| H. W. Eaton, Esq. ... | ... | ... | ... | 4201 |
| W. H. W. Ballantine, Esq. ... | ... | ... | ... | <u>3796</u> |
| Majority for Mr. Eaton | ... | ... | ... | 405 |

There were 20 spoilt papers, whilst the number on the register was 9,736.

The Conservatives were wild with delight, and listened, amidst great cheering, whilst their Member profusely thanked them from the King's Head Hotel for his seventh return to Parliament. Mr. Ballantine, from the Queen's, expressed regret at the result, but promised, if asked, to again contest the City upon a future occasion. At the assembling of Parliament,

MR. HENRY WILLIAM EATON

took his seat. The result of the elections went in favour of the Conservatives and Liberal Unionists, and the resignation of the Gladstone Ministry followed, when the Queen sent for Lord Salisbury in August, who formed another out of his immediate followers, Lord Hartington and the Liberal Unionists giving it their outside support.




CHAPTER XCVI.

THE QUEEN'S JUBILEE ; A PEERAGE CONFERRED UPON THE MEMBER ;
GLADSTONIAN LIBERAL GAIN.

Victoria, continued (1887).

Her Majesty's Jubilee—A Peerage conferred upon Mr. Eaton—His choice of the title of Baron Cheylesmore—His retiring address—Takes his seat in the Lords—A vacancy at Coventry—The Hon. H. F. Eaton comes forward for the Conservatives—And Mr. W. H. W. Ballantine for the Liberals—Their views as to the Irish Home Rule question, &c.—A proposed Temperance candidate—Mr. Ballantine has the Irish vote—Speakers for the candidates—The Liberal Unionists and their meeting—Proposed formation of an Association—The nominations—Events of the polling day—The numbers—Mr. W. H. W. Ballantine elected—His reception in the House—Account of Mr. Ballantine.

HE Queen's Jubilee was duly celebrated in Coventry on the 20th June, 1887, amidst considerable rejoicings, and in the same month Her Majesty conferred a Peerage upon Mr. H. W. Eaton, M.P., who chose the title of Baron Cheylesmore, of Cheylesmore, Coventry, from the estate there, which he had purchased from the Marquis of Hertford in 1871. The Peerage was a tribute to the commercial capabilities of the Member, and, through the title's appropriateness, no less an honour to the City. Mr. Eaton having gone through the form of accepting the office of Steward of the Manor of Northstead, the seat for Coventry became vacant, and on the 28th June he published the following address to his old supporters—

"To the Independent Freemen and Electors of the City of Coventry. Gentlemen,—Her Majesty having been graciously pleased to confer upon me a Peerage, my seat in the House of Commons becomes vacant. I cannot but feel that the honour bestowed upon me may be considered also a compliment to you, to whom I owe my introduction to public life, in whose service I have passed so many years, and from whom I have received so large and generous a measure of confidence and support. In now taking leave of you as your Member, I have the satisfaction of knowing that I shall be still connected with you in other ways, and I shall at all times feel it a duty and a pleasure to assist in promoting the welfare of the good old City of Coventry.

I have the honour to remain, your faithful servant,

16, Prince's Gate, Hyde Park, June 28th, 1887.

HENRY W. EATON."

Lord Cheylesmore took his seat in the House of Lords, and the Membership for Coventry being vacant ; simultaneously the addresses of Colonel the Hon. H. F. Eaton, of the Grenadier Guards, son of Lord Cheylesmore, and Mr. W. H. W. Ballantine, appeared, offering their services. Colonel Eaton had assisted his father at former elections in the constituency, and the Conservatives felt that they had a good candidate.



HENRY WILLIAM, FIRST LORD CHEYLESMORE (DECEASED).

(From a Photograph by Arthur Marx, Hamburg.)

Cheylesmore

handed in a third paper. His proposers on the first, were J. E. Banks, Esq., and M. Wilks, Esq.; in the second, Messrs. L. S. Booth and T. Beech; and in the third, Messrs. W. F. Dawson and Arthur Russell. Afterwards the Mayor heard objections to the nominations, and overruled certain made against Mr. Ballantine's nominations.

The polling took place on Saturday, the 9th July, at nineteen polling stations, and during the day the candidates visited the chief districts. Either side was hopeful, but not sanguine. Election literature appeared during the day, and a handbill asked the Railway employees to vote for Mr. Ballantine. Detachments of police were placed at various points in the City to keep order, and 100 specials sworn in. The polling opened quietly, yet within an hour between 1,400 and 1,500 Electors had polled, and the influx of voters at the polling places in the dinner hour and evening was excessive. There were 5,527 householders, 4,306 Freemen, and 34 lodgers, or a total of 9,867 Electors on the register, and when the boxes were counted at St. Mary's Hall a large poll was expected. It was generally supposed that Colonel Eaton was in, and an immense crowd before the King's Head Hotel amused itself by singing "Rule Britannia," "the National Anthem," and other songs, but at 12.20 on Sunday morning, the Mayor, Alderman Tomson, declared the state of the poll had been—

| | | | |
|------------------------------|-----|-----|------|
| W. H. W. Ballantine, Esq. .. | ... | ... | 4229 |
| The Hon. Herbert F. Eaton | ... | ... | 4213 |
| Majority for Mr. Ballantine | ... | ... | 16 |

The statement came as a surprise to both parties, but it showed the more perfect organization of the Liberal party. There were 445 more votes recorded than at the election in the preceding year. The result caused the wildest joy to the victors, who celebrated the event in various ways. The Member and candidate travelled to London the same morning, and

MR. WILLIAM HENRY WALTER BALLANTINE

was introduced to the House of Commons, on Monday, the 11th, by Mr. Arnold Morley and Mr. R. T. Reid, being greeted with the cheers of the Opposition.

The new Member was the son of the late Serjeant Ballantine, by Eliza, daughter of Mr. Henry Gyles. He was born in February in 1847, received his education at Cheltenham College, and Trinity Hall, Cambridge, and had the degree of LL.B. Like his father, he took to the law, was called to the Bar of the Inner Temple in 1871, and joined the South-Eastern Circuit. In 1876, Mr. Ballantine married Eleanor, daughter of Mr. Richard Brazier, widow of the late Mr. T. A. Mitchell, M.P. for Bridport.



W. H. BALLANTINE, ESQ., M.P.

From a Photograph by T. Russell & Son, Baker Street, London.

Ballantine, T. H. W. M. L. K.

CHAPTER XCVII.

A GENEROUS BENEFACTOR ; DEATH OF LORD CHEYLESMORE ;
PREPARING FOR A CONTEST.

Victoria, continued (1887 to 1892).

Increased local trades, and Town extension—A new Grammar School built—Gifts to the City—Technical Institute—New Bablake School—Mr. David Spencer's generous gifts—Spencer Industrial Arts Trust—Spencer Charity—Clubs—Colonel Eaton resigns candidature—Increase of the Borough—Mr. H. C. Richards becomes the Conservative candidate—His biography—Death of Lord Cheylesmore—Expressions of regret at Coventry—The funeral—Mr. Richards's withdrawal—Mr. Ballantine, M.P., and the Bednell case—His Bill to abolish the St. Michael's Vicar's Act—Mr. Charles James Murray becomes the Conservative and Unionist candidate—His biography—Formation of a Liberal Unionist Association—Preparations and meetings—Mr. Ballantine votes on the Irish question, and other matters.

DURING these years there was a considerable increase in the bicycle and other trades at Coventry, and business vastly improved. New factories sprang up, and many houses were erected.

Mr. David Spencer presented a park near the Warwick Road, for recreation purposes (costing about £5,000), to the City. It was opened in October, 1883, with that at Swanswell, given by the Trustees of Sir Thomas White's Charity, and at the same time a statue of Sir Thomas White was unveiled by the Mayor, Albert S. Tomson, Esq. Mr. Spencer also gave the buildings in Earl Street, now used as the Technical Institute, in 1887. The question of education was also to the fore ; in July, 1885, the new Grammar School on the Warwick Road was opened. The Bablake Boys' School was opened under a new *regime* in June, 1888 ; Bayley's and Fairfax's foundations having been amalgamated therewith, and the Science scholars temporarily accommodated at the Technical Institute until the new School was built near Coundon Station.

Mr. David Spencer died on June 9th, 1888. He had indeed been a generous giver to the City during his life, but, by his will, became the chief of Coventry's public benefactors. He left amounts to various local objects, and amongst others, "the sum of £20,000, upon trust, to apply the income in or towards the advancement of such exclusively charitable object, or objects, and if more than one, in such proportion and in such manner, in all respects, as the said Trustees do from time to time deem best calculated to benefit the said City of Coventry or the inhabitants thereof, or such

of the said inhabitants, or such class or classes thereof, as the said Trustees shall from time to time, in their or his uncontrolled discretion, think most advantageous and beneficial ;" but whilst declaring "that a diffusion of a practical knowledge of the Industrial Arts, and of the sciences connected therewith, would, to my view, be calculated to help a manufacturing population like that of Coventry, and that any object or institution calculated to promote such diffusion will be in harmony with my desire and intentions in bequeathing the said legacy," but he declared that this expression of his opinion left his Trustees "absolute discretion in the appropriation or management of the said charitable legacy, or the income thereof." Thus originated "The Spencer's Industrial Arts Trust." The residue under his will (about £112,000 net) he gave to form a fund for almswomen, who were to be natives of Coventry, or been resident there at least seven years, not having received Parish relief, and of not less than 65 years of age. He willed that each poor woman should receive six shillings weekly, with £2 per annum for clothing and a reasonable sum for coals ; religion to be no disqualification. This trust was established under the title of "Spencer's Charity."

A new Liberal Club was opened November 15th, 1889, situate at the corner of Warwick Road and Union Street. In the same year the Reform Club, which had been started in Warwick Row, and had shifted its position to the Holyhead Road, in consequence of the premises being required for the erection of a new Chapel, was removed to Greyfriars House, Warwick Row ; a Company being formed for the purchase of the property. The Conservative Club continued at the old Castle Hotel premises in Broadgate.

Colonel Eaton had been the acknowledged Conservative candidate for Coventry, but on the disturbances and irregularities in the regiment of Grenadier Guards, stationed at London, in July, 1890, he succeeded to the command on the resignation of the late officer commanding, and went with the regiment to Bermuda. Previous to leaving England, he placed his retirement in the hands of the leaders of the party in Coventry, to accept or decline, as they chose.

After an Inquiry, lasting several days, to consider the question of enlarging the Town area, an Order for the extension of the City boundary came into force on the 9th November, 1890. The conditions attending the extension were of an important character, and are thus briefly summed up in the "Coventry Times" of November 5th—

"The extension, briefly explained, includes the Red Lane district, Kingfield, Radford, Mount Street, Old Allesley Road, Earlsdon, Spencer Park, and the new streets adjoining, the Grammar School, the Railway Station, and that part of the Coventry Park which lies between the Warwick Road and the Stoney Road. The area thus added to the City is 1,640 acres ; this more than doubles the extension of the City, the existing area being 1,486 acres ; the enlargement will bring it up to 3,126 acres. About 3,000 people will be added to the population, and the ratable value is increased by £12,025, the total being £141,482, as against £129,457. The Wards are rearranged to include the added area with as little disturbance as is compatible with approximation to equality between the constituencies in respect of numbers. The elective part of the Council has already gone out of office and been re-elected, the Aldermen will retire on Saturday, and the annual meeting of the

Council for the election of Mayor, the election of Aldermen, and other business, will be held on Monday. The property of the Corporation is to be held, and the powers exercised, for the benefit of the whole City as extended, and all the liabilities of the Corporation will attach to the extended City. The property and liabilities of the Rural Sanitary Authority, the Highway Authorities, and Earlsdon Lighting Inspectors, will be transferred to the Corporation. The City School Board will become, without a new election, the School Board for the enlarged City, and the School Board for the extra municipal part of St. Michael's Parish will cease to have jurisdiction in that part of the area thus added to the City, and the School building and liabilities, and everything connected with the Board, so far as the added area is concerned, will pass into the hands of the City School Board. The extension brings into the City nearly the whole of the population, and two-thirds of the ratable value of the Rural Sanitary District."

In February, 1891, the name of Mr. H. C. Richards, of London, was mentioned. He was born at Hackney, in 1851, received his education at Brighton, Gravesend, and the City of London School. Mr. Richards first entered into City life, but, choosing the Law as a profession, in 1881 he was called to the Bar, and in 1887 appointed Junior Counsel at the Central Criminal Court for Her Majesty's Postmaster-General. He was a strong supporter of the Church of England Young Men's Societies. As a speaker, Mr. Richards had few superiors. He contested Northampton with Mr. Bradlaugh on two occasions, and was a representative on the London School Board for three years. He addressed a large gathering of Conservatives on February 24th at the Conservative Club, being unanimously adopted as their candidate, and soon, at various meetings having made himself known, became popular by his interesting speeches.

The sudden and unexpected death of Lord Cheylesmore, on Friday, October 2nd, 1891, at Warsaw, in Poland, was received in Coventry with the deepest regret. His Lordship's connection with the City had endeared him to many, both friends and opponents politically, whilst his widespread philanthropy, shewn even until the time of his death in all good works, had fostered the feeling and rendered him exceedingly popular. Some weeks before he had left England for a tour in Russia, accompanied by General du Platt, C.B., Equerry to the Queen. After visiting Moscow and St. Petersburg, his Lordship was detained at Warsaw by a slight illness, from the effects of which no danger was at first apprehended, but the malady became suddenly severe, and he was found dead. Telegrams were sent announcing the fact to his family, and Colonel Eaton (who had returned from Bermuda) wired the sad intelligence to Mr. W. F. Wyley, the President of the Coventry Conservative Association, on Friday evening. Early on Saturday morning flags were hung half-mast at the Conservative Club and other places in the City, and the telegram posted at the "Standard" office in Broadgate, where it attracted crowds of sympathetic readers. Colonel Eaton at once proceeded to Berlin, in order to bring the body of his father to England. The deceased Baron was born in 1816, and was 75 years of age. His remains were removed from Berlin on Wednesday night, the 7th October, and brought over to England. The funeral took place at the Highgate Cemetery, on Saturday, October 10th, there being present Lord Cheylesmore, Colonel Eaton, Hon. Frances Eaton, Lady George Pratt,

Lord George Pratt, General du Platt, C.B., and Sir Henry Hoare. A number of Coventry citizens met the procession at the Cemetery, amongst whom were Mr. W. F. Wyley, Mr. G. F. Twist, and Mr. F. Bird.

Colonel Eaton warmly supported Mr. Richards, and at a Conservative meeting in the Corn Exchange, on the 23rd November, 1891, stated his reasons for withdrawing, but shortly afterwards Mr. Richards himself withdrew, and the Colonel again refusing to come forward, the Conservative party at Coventry were left without a candidate.

Mr. Ballantine interested himself in the Bednell *espionage* case, and went to the south of France with a view to help in the matter.

Meanwhile, St. Michael's Vicar's Rate question forced itself upon that Parish, and Mr. Ballantine brought in a Bill to abolish the Act, but it was not proceeded with.

Mr. Charles James Murray, of Loch Carron, Ross-shire, and 27, Berkeley Square, London, now became the Conservative and Unionist candidate for Coventry. He was the eldest son of the Right Hon. Sir Charles Augustus Murray, K.C.B., second son of the fifth Earl of Dunmore, by his first wife, Elizabeth, only daughter of Mr. James Wadsworth, of Geneso, New York, and was born in 1851. Having been educated at Eton, he entered the Diplomatic Service in 1872, served in the Foreign Office 1872-3, was Attaché to the British Embassy at Rome 1873-5, and at St. Petersburg 1875, and third Secretary there 1875-6, when he retired from the Service. He is a Deputy-Lieutenant of Ross-shire. In 1875 he married the Lady Anne Francesca, only daughter of Heneage, sixth Earl of Aylesford. Mr. Murray was elected for Hastings in April, 1880, where he became very popular, but resigned in 1883. He was a good speaker. He took up his residence at Anstey Hall to be in touch with the constituency. His active canvassing, assisted by Lady Anne Murray, gained him many friends and supporters.

Meanwhile the Liberal Unionist Association was formed, and gained strength, in spite of the ultra-Liberal opposition. In anticipation of a General Election, the Conservatives held meetings in the different Wards, and at the Corn Exchange; neither were the Gladstonian Liberals backward in doing the like.

Mr. Ballantine, M.P., during his five years in Parliament, voted almost invariably with his party, and especially on matters connected with the Irish question. His negative votes were given, one against applying the closure in a particular case, and the other against taking a religious census, and the "Coventry Herald," of July 1st, adds—

"On the consideration of the Local Government Bill, Mr. Ballantine voted in favour of the amendments, that all members of County Councils should be popularly elected, and that there should be no Aldermen. He supported the proposals to pay the travelling expenses of County Councillors, and to take from the Court of Quarter Sessions the appointment, control, and dismissal of a Chief Constable, which, however, were not passed. He also voted for Mr. Channing's new clause dividing local rates between the owner and occupier. On February 21st, 1890, he voted in favour of Mr. Stansfeld's amendment to the Address regretting that Local Government legislation was still defective, and that no intention was announced of forming District and Parochial Councils.

He opposed the Tithe Rent Charge Recovery Bill, which provided for tithes being paid by the landlord rather than the tenant, and placed the owner to recover them in the hands of the County Court, and he voted in favour of an equitable revision of tithes in accordance with the altered conditions of agriculture. On February 21st, 1890, he voted in favour of Mr. A. Ackland's amendment to the Address regretting no reference in the Queen's Speech to Free Education in England, and in July of the same year he voted in favour of devoting £90,000, instead of £40,000, as proposed, of the proceeds accruing under the Local Taxation Bill, to the relief of fees in Scotch Elementary Schools. Only £40,000, however, was sanctioned, and he then voted in favour of County Councils in Scotland being enabled to devote the money to standards other than compulsory ones, the effect of which would be to free all the standards. Upon the introduction of the Free Education Bill, he voted (June 29th, 1891) in favour of Mr. Fowler's instruction to the Committee to make provision, in the case of districts where there existed no School under public control, for the introduction of the principle of local representation in the supervision of Schools receiving the free grants. He supported both Mr. Dillwyn's and Mr. Pritchard Morgan's motions in favour of Welsh Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Church in Scotland. On the subject of Perpetual Pensions, he voted for Mr. Bradlaugh's motion, that 27 years purchase was too high a rate to pay for their commutation. He shewed his sympathy with the Volunteer Movement by voting in favour of making good from the public revenues all deficiencies in Volunteer equipments necessary to efficiency, and all debts of Corps incurred on that account. By his vote he helped to defeat the Compensation Clauses of the Local Taxation Bill, supporting Mr. Caine's amendment declining to assent to pay out the public monies for the extinction of annual licenses, thus freeing money which was subsequently devoted to Technical Education purposes. He supported Mr. Gladstone's amendment to the Customs and Revenue Bill for establishing an equality in the treatment of real and personal property. His contempt for the House of Lords as a legislative assembly was shewn by his support of Mr. Cobb (May 2nd, 1890) in his instruction on going into Committee on the Allotment Bill, that the Committee have power to insert clauses creating, by popular election, local authorities, and with larger powers for acquiring and managing land for allotment purposes. His anxiety for the adoption of the principle of 'one man one vote' was evinced by the support he gave (March 3rd, 1891) to Mr. Stansfeld's motion to amend and simplify the laws relating to the qualification and registration of Parliamentary Electors, and especially to provide (a) that no person be permitted to vote in more than one electoral area during the continuance of one and the same register; (b) that the term of qualification be reduced to not more than three months; (c) that Registration Superintendents be appointed, who shall be officially responsible for superintending the preparation of accurate lists of voters."



CHAPTER XCVIII.

THE SEAT RETAINED.

Victoria, continued (1892).

Parliament dissolved—Addresses of Mr. Ballantine and Mr. Murray—Disturbance at a Unionist demonstration—Principal speakers at candidates' meetings—The ladies and the election—Action of the Coventry Trades Council, and of the Fair Trade League—The Irish vote—The writ received by the Mayor—Receiving the nominations—Candidates proposers and seconders—The polling day—Incidents thereon—Counting the ballot papers—The result—In favour of Mr. Ballantine—How received by the Liberals—Mr. Ballantine's response—Mr. Murray at the King's Head.



AT the close of its seventh session, the twelfth Parliament of Queen Victoria, and the twenty-fourth of the century, came to an end on the 28th June, 1892, after a busy period of 5 years and 327 days; whereupon electioneering was opened at Coventry by the issue of the candidates' addresses (Mr. Ballantine, Gladstonian Liberal, and Mr. Murray, Conservative and Unionist), and the usual speaking at meetings. On Friday, June 24th, the Right Hon. Joseph Chamberlain addressed a meeting in support of Mr. Charles James Murray at the Corn Exchange, at which Mr. Alderman Gulson presided, when the assembly was disturbed by considerable rowdyism from a section of opponents. Mr. T. P. O'Connor, Mr. Arthur O'Connor, Mr. H. Labouchere, and other gentlemen, spoke at Mr. Ballantine's meetings, and both candidates were nightly busy in the Wards and out-districts. Lady Anne Murray ably seconded her husband's endeavours, and was aided by the members of "the Primrose League," whilst the ladies of the "Women's Liberal Association" attended Mr. Ballantine's meetings in large numbers, showing great enthusiasm in the cause. The Coventry Trades Council urged their fellow Trades Unionists to support Mr. Ballantine. The Fair Trade League was in favour of Mr. Murray; and the Irish Nationalists, who had a special committee of their own in Well Street, naturally favoured the former.

The writ was received on Wednesday, June 29th, and delivered to the Mayor (George Singer, Esq.,) by the Post Office Authorities in the morning, and his Worship sat at the Mayoress's Parlour, St. Mary's Hall, on Saturday morning, to receive nominations. Either candidate had two. On the first paper, Mr. Ballantine was proposed and seconded by Messrs. Joseph Cash and Edwin Rainbow; on the second, by Aldermen Tomson and Banks. Mr. Murray's first paper was signed by Liberal Unionists, his proposers being Alderman Gulson and John Bill, Esq.; and on the second nomination, W. F. Wyley, Esq., and Alderman Dalton. Each nomination paper had the usual



Charles Murray

CHARLES J. MURRAY, ESQ.,
Parliamentary Candidate for Coventry, 1892.
 (From a Photograph by Mr. F. Lupton, 27 Hertford Street, Coventry.)



Herbert F. Eaton

COLONEL THE HON. HERBERT F. EATON,
Parliamentary Candidate for Coventry, 1892.
 (From a Photograph by Mr. J. Edwards, 1 Park Side, Hyde Park Corner, S.W.)

eight assentors. The polling took place on Monday, the 4th July; there were twenty-five polling places in the City and out-districts, the register showed 10,838 Electors, and the arrangements for conducting the election were carried out by the Town Clerk (Mr. T. Browett), the Assistant Town Clerk (Mr. L. Beard), and a large staff of assistants. Many factories and workshops were closed, and as the day went on the streets became lively, and party colours were conspicuous. Some skirmishes occurred, but the police succeeded in preserving order. Mr. and Lady Anne Murray were early about in an open carriage; Mr. Ballantine, being a widower, drove round to his committee rooms in the company of first one gentleman and then another; and during the progress the respective candidates were greeted with cheers or groans from friends or opponents alternately. It was given out that the election would be fought on "purity," and there was evidence that the votes of "the free and independent" Electors were not so eagerly sought after as upon some former occasions. Excitement increased as the day progressed, and it was difficult to tell at the close of the poll which gentleman had been returned. During the counting of the ballot papers at St. Mary's Hall, crowds of persons congregated in Broadgate and at the King's Head and Queen's Hotels, where exciting scenes ensued. The result was declared from St. Mary's Hall by the Mayor, at twenty minutes to twelve, to have been—

| | | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----|-----|-----|------|
| W. H. W. Ballantine, Esq. | ... | ... | ... | 4754 |
| C. J. Murray, Esq. | ... | ... | ... | 4611 |
| Majority for Mr. Ballantine | | | | 143 |

The Liberals hastily left Bailey Lane for the Queen's Hotel, where

MR. WILLIAM HENRY WALTER BALLANTINE

received the news of his re-election and the hearty congratulations of his friends; when the cheering was so great that on appearing upon the balcony he was unable to be heard, but afterwards made addresses from the Liberal Club and at the Reform Club. Mr. Ballantine, at the former, most heartily thanked his party for their help, declaring the greatest cause of delight in the victory was that he should not be parted from them, and that for another Parliament he should have the honour to serve the City. It was, he declared, the proudest moment of his life, and he should never forget the devotion he had received from all who had laboured in his cause. The crowd outside the King's Head Hotel was naturally disappointed at the result, but cheered their candidate on his appearing upon the balcony to return thanks to his supporters; when the excitement had abated, Mr. Murray said: "Ladies and gentlemen, I wish to give one word of thanks to those who have helped me during the fight. (Loud cheers.) The next best thing to winning a fight is to take a beating like a man; let us take our beating like men, and win next time." (Renewed cheering.) Lady Anne Murray, who stood beside her husband, said, in reply to an expression of regret: "We have fought well, and done our best, but we must do better on the next occasion."

CHAPTER XCIX.

MEMBER AND CANDIDATE.

Victoria, continued (1892 to 1894).

The meeting of Parliament—Resignation of Lord Salisbury—Mr. W. E. Gladstone's Fourth Administration—Presentation of the late Lord Cheylesmore's portrait—Mr. Ballantine's actions in and out of Parliament—Magisterial appointments—Inquiry into Coventry General Charities—Mr. C. J. Murray continues the Conservative and Unionist candidate—Resides in the neighbourhood—New water scheme—Broad irrigation sewage principle—Opposed in Parliament—The Town Clerkship—Mr. Ballantine votes for Irish Home Rule Bill—Passed in the Commons—Rejected in the Lords—Mr. F. A. Newdigate, M.P., and the retention of the military at Coventry—A large Board School—Population of Coventry in 1891—Trade in 1893—Other railway facilities wanted.



HE new Parliament met on Thursday, the 4th August, 1892, and re-elected the Right Hon. A. W. Peel as Speaker. The result of the elections was a disappointment to the Conservatives and Liberal Unionists. Lord Salisbury resigned; on the 28th, Mr. W. E. Gladstone became Prime Minister, and commenced his Fourth Administration. Mr. Ballantine was one of the first Members to be sworn in when Parliament resumed.

In October, the Hon. Frances L. Eaton offered to the Corporation, on behalf of herself and her sister, Lady George Pratt, a full-length portrait of their father, the late Lord Cheylesmore, by Baccani, which was cordially accepted.

During the last Session of Parliament, Mr. Ballantine introduced a Bill into the House to repeal the St. Michael's Vicar Rate Act, but the Parliamentary Committee declared the Bill was a private one, and had not complied with the Standing Orders. Mr. Ballantine therefore abandoned it, with the intention of introducing a private Act on the subject at some future date, but subsequently dropped the idea for the time. In October, 1892, he drew attention to the mode of electing Trustees to administer the various local Charities of Coventry, and remarked upon the disproportion of Liberal Magistrates on the Bench. In December following, the appointment of seven prominent Liberal Gladstonians as Magistrates was resented by the Conservatives. In May, 1893, Mr. Ballantine asked in the House whether the Charity Commissioners would refuse their sanction to the ten vacancies in the body of Trustees of the General Charities of Coventry being filled up on the nomination of the existing Trustees, and whether they would give effect to Sir John Swinburne's resolution of May, 1886, by proposing a scheme placing the election of the new Trustees in the hands of the City

Council of Coventry. Mr. T. E. Ellis, in reply, said the proceedings upon the application of the Trustees, which was received in the month of June, 1892, had been suspended until the Commissioners should receive from the Trustees such further application as would enable the Commissioners to establish a scheme, providing that a certain number of future Trustees shall be appointed otherwise than by co-optation.

In August it was announced that the Charity Commissioners proposed to hold an Inquiry into the General Charities of Coventry, which took place on the 15th and 16th of November, 1893, at St. Mary's Hall, before Mr. G. S. D. Murray, one of the Assistant Charity Commissioners.

Mr. C. J. Murray continued to be the Conservative and Unionist candidate, but it was reported in September that he had been offered a safe seat in the south of England for the next election. In December, however, the appearance of that gentleman and his wife, who were staying at Packington Hall, at the Volunteer prize distribution, came as a pleasant surprise to some of the parties, whilst early in January, 1893, he attended the Conservative and Unionist dinner at the Craven Arms Hotel, and in March spoke at meetings in Bishop Street Ward and the Corn Exchange against the Local Veto Bill. In April, having taken Allesley Hall, Coventry, he again became resident near the Town, and was present at the Coventry Liberal Unionist Association annual dinner on the 5th July, 1893; when Lord Wolmer, M.P., a late candidate for the City, and President of the Association, occupied the chair; and has since attended different meetings of his party.

A reported shortness of water at the Waterworks at Spon End ended in the Corporation; acting under the advice of Mr. Hawkesley, C.E.; seeking water on their estates at Whitley and Pinley, which having been found, new mains were laid from thence through the Town to a storage reservoir on some high land at Barker's Butts Lane, and a large pumping station erected near the new well at Whitley. This well is 150 feet deep, below which, with a 24-inch boring, is a further depth of 100 feet. The daily yield is estimated to be at least 500,000 gallons.

In August, 1892, an application was made in the Coventry County Court by the Warwick Rural Sanitary Authority to restrain the Coventry Corporation from polluting the River Sherbourne, when an injunction was granted, but suspended for a year. Early in September the Coventry City Council, acting under eminent advice, adopted the principle of broad irrigation; proposing to extend their works, and to purchase a considerable-sized farm near Ryton and Bubbenhall on which to carry it out. Considerable opposition arose in the Warwickshire County Council, and Leamington and Warwick Town Councils, from Lord Leigh and one or more landowners, when in February, 1893, a Local Government Board Inquiry was held at St. Mary's Hall by Colonel Ducat, and numerous witnesses for and against the scheme heard during the eight days it lasted. In May the Town Clerk received a communication from the Local Government Board,

stating that the Department had granted the Corporation a Provisional Order, empowering them to put into force the Lands Clauses Act, subject to the consent of Parliament, for the purpose of acquiring land in the Avon valley and for the disposal of the sewage of Coventry. Lord Leigh, fearing the result would ruin his deer park, and ultimately make Stoneleigh Abbey untenable, sent a written protest to the Corporation, but when the scheme came before the House of Commons in July, it was warmly opposed. Mr. Ballantine stated the position of the Coventry Corporation, and combatted the opposition. In the end the matter was somewhat summarily dealt with, and the Coventry scheme, being withdrawn from the Provisional Order, dropped. The Coventry Corporation obtained the suspension of the injunction for another year, from August 9th, 1893, at the hands of the Judge of the Coventry County Court.

Mr. Thomas Browett, who had since November 23rd, 1858, most ably fulfilled the office of Town Clerk, resigned the appointment, and Mr. Lewis Beard, B.A., the Assistant Town Clerk, was appointed to the office on the 22nd March, 1893.

Mr. Ballantine attended various Ward and other meetings in the City, and presented some petitions from time to time. He voted for the third reading of Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule Bill, which passed the Commons on the 3rd September by a majority of 34, but which the House of Lords rejected by a majority of 378.

In December, 1893, Mr. F. A. Newdigate, M.P., asked a question in the House on the approaching withdrawal of the Artillery from Coventry, and in reply, the Secretary of State for War stated that it was scarcely a question depending upon the wishes of the inhabitants in the Town, but whilst other bodies of troops might possibly from time to time be quartered at Coventry, he would give no pledge on the subject. It was felt that the removal of a large body of men and horses would be a mistake, financially, and the City Council took up the matter, desiring Mr. Newdigate and Mr. Ballantine to use their influence to ensure the permanent use of the barracks by the military.

The Coventry School Board built the new School in Wheatley Street, designed to accommodate 1,272 children, in 1893, at a cost of about £18,000.

The Census of 1891 showed that the male population of Coventry was 25,750, and the female 27,254, or a total population of 53,004. Coventry, with other places, passed through a period of trade depression in part of 1893, and whilst some firms in the bicycle trade were happily successful during that year, others, as shown from their balance sheets, were considerable losers from various causes. The introduction of new trades is required, and in some cases their advent would doubtless materially aid, if carried on along with, the bicycle industries of the City. The position of Coventry—one of the most inland Towns of the country—has suffered considerably from the want of increased means of railway transit, and a connection with the Midland or other railway system is still desirable. Such connection would doubtless as materially add to the City's future prosperity as it would increase its productions, manufactures, and population.



MORGAN, SITTING FOR COVENTRY.

"MORGAN SITTING FOR COVENTRY."

(From an original Copy in the possession of Mr. JOHN J. MOORE, Coventry.)



"THE COMING STRUGGLE."

(From the Author's Collection.)

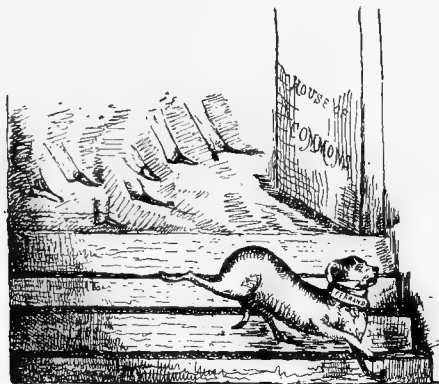


THE TRIMMER.

Mr. FLOWER, in his Address at Coventry, states
—"He considered it unworthy of a party, who called
themselves either Christians or Churchmen—he was sorry
there should ever have been such a cry raised in the
Country as the "No Popery" cry."

"THE TRIMMER," OR "BETWEEN TWO CASKS WE FALL TO THE GROUND."

(From the Author's Collection.)



THE "LION-HEARTED" FERRAND.

From "PUNCH."

"According to an old Persian story, a town was thrown into great perplexity by the stopping of the conduit that supplied it with water. Men and women were running hither and thither, comfortless and amazed. At length, it was discovered that the main pipe had been choked up by an old worthless slipper. The paltry impediment was removed with a feeling of angry contempt, and again the waters flowed on—again the people were at ease.

"For three nights have the proceedings of the House of Commons been stopped by a Ferrand. The whole country, looking to Parliament for a supply of wholesome laws, for comfortable counsel, has been denied the blessing, and all in consequence of a—Ferrand! The case of the villanous old slipper is fully paralleled.

"Ferrand—the 'Lion-Hearted Ferrand,' as Mr. Oastler calls him—charges Sir James Graham with base, dishonourable conduct; with, in fact, the subornation of forgery. He next accuses Mr. Hogg of nothing short of perjury. These charges Ferrand can in no way substantiate; nevertheless, it is his humour to believe in the truth of them; whereupon, the House of Commons by unanimous vote declares there is no truth whatever in the hon. member for Knaresborough. Mr. Ferrand will, doubtless, treat this vote with utter disregard! There are some men, says Burke, who are at once "contemptible and content."

Freemen and Electors, will you have such a man as this to represent you in the House of Commons?

W. FRED. TAUNTON, PRINTER, BURGESS, COVENTRY

"THE LION-HEARTED FERRAND. FROM PUNCH."

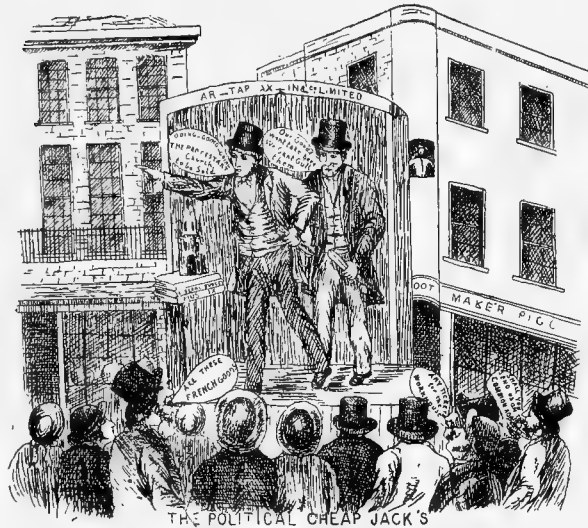
(From the Author's Collection.)



THE POLITICAL YOUTHS OF COVENTRY.

"THE POLITICAL YOUTHS OF COVENTRY."

(From the Author's Collection.)

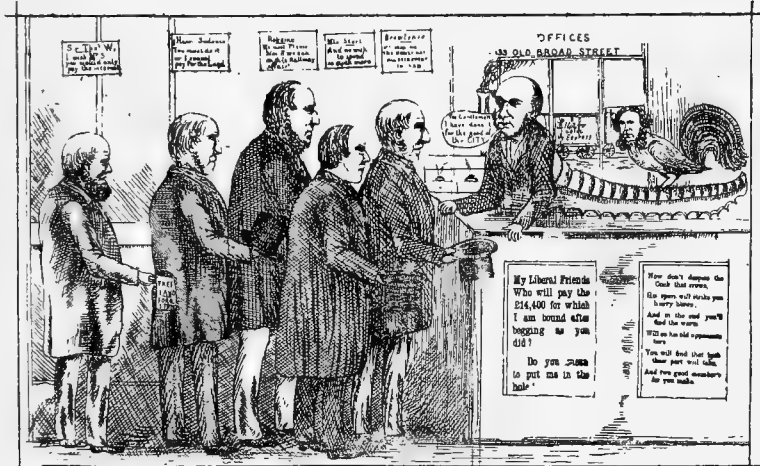


Now then, my Liberal Chickens, let us have the pleasure of making you a few presents—an assortment of valuable Pledges. All we want in return is your Votes. Here is a valuable Protestant Article, warranted to secure all your interests, and be of the greatest benefit to your wives and families; I am willing to knock it down at any price, in fact, we will give it to any of you who will offer us two votes, or, come, I will accept of one if you have no more to spare—us half-a-loaf is better than no bread—and that is what you have had to live on for some time. Now, here's a Whip, a splendid Whip, which is solely intended by us to drive people to the Workhouse, where you will receive the magnificent reward of 6d. a-day and a loaf! What—no bidders? I always understood use was second nature. Well, we will put that on one side and find you something else. I did intend to offer to your notice an article known as the FRENCH TREATY, but find upon referring to our stock that we disposed of the last to the Emperor of the French. But here I say, I have a most useful article which is very much run on, at the present time, and should we meet with the success we anticipate, we have arranged for a large supply.

The Article I allude to is the well-known PINKALINE, warranted pure, if not harmless. Any offer, Gentlemen! what, no use for the Pimpaline! really, you are very hard to please. I will now offer to your notice a Pair of Shares, only try them—they are warranted, to please any flock of constituents in England, for bear in mind I am Jack-of-all-Trades, and master of none. Here is a Stock of Soft Soap I am offering for sale. The next Article I have to produce is known and has been for years respected as the CORONATION OATH, having been long connected with the Constitution of the Country. Now, Gentlemen, it is painful to me to part with an Article for which we have ever professed the deepest veneration, but in order to secure the success of GLADSTONE & Co., we have determined to dispose of it to the highest bidder, without reserve. Is there no offer, Gentlemen! then I shall retire from the rostrum, bidding you a kind adieu, and also a fond farewell to MY HOPES OF THE WOOLBAGG, and in my retirement to the Continent, with the rest of my Family, I shall often breathe a prayer for the welfare of Coventry for their kindness to me.

“THE POLITICAL CHEAP JACKS.”

(From the Author's Collection.)



THE POLITICAL RAILWAY SCHEMERS.
The Sequel to Picture No. 1.

"THE POLITICAL RAILWAY SCHEMERS."

(From the Author's Collection.)



"SERIOUS ACCIDENT ON THE SOUTHAM RAILWAY."

(From the Author's Collection.)

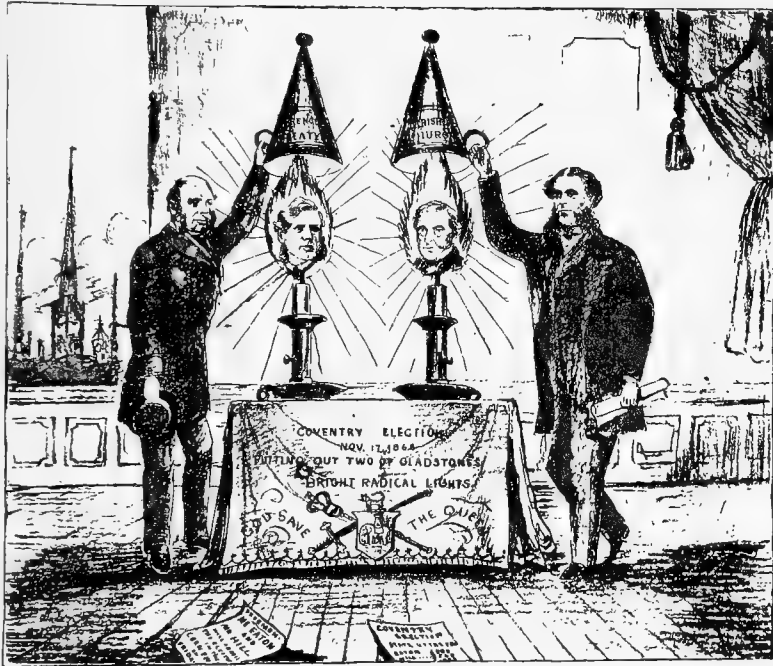
No Bribery Handicap of 3,000 Sovs. each. The Second to save his Stake. 4 Year olds to carry 14 stones. Young Horses allowed 7lb. Horses that have never Won allowed 14lb.
 Betting 4 to 1 on Prince William - 2 to 1 on Cock of the Walk - 10 to 1 against the Jackdaw - 100 to 1 against the Old Cart Horse



COVENTRY STEEPLE CHASE, NO. 2.

The Jackdaw went ahead at the start but (Sweet William) soon passed him, then (the Cock of the Walk) got Second, while the Cart Horse got unseated, and was thrown over the stone quarry.

(From the Author's Collection.)



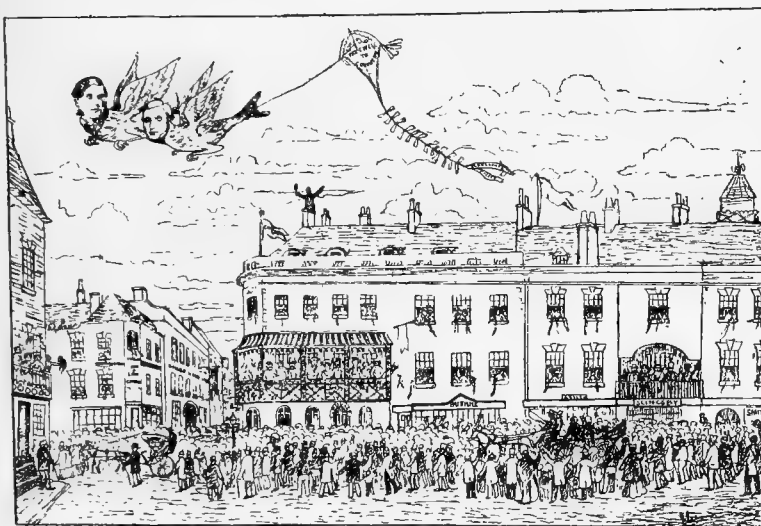
"COVENTRY ELECTION, NOVEMBER 17, 1868. PUTTING OUT TWO OF GLADSTONE'S BRIGHT RADICAL LIGHTS."

(From the Author's Collection.)



"THE CHAMPIONS OF THE ARENA."

(From the Author's Collection.)



EXTRAORDINARY FLIGHT OF TWO RADICAL BIRDS FROM COVENTRY
 At 4 o'clock, on Tuesday, November 17, 1868.

THE CHAIRING OF MESSRS. EATON AND HILL, OR THE "EXTRAORDINARY
 FLIGHT OF TWO RADICAL BIRDS FROM COVENTRY."

(From the Author's Collection.)



"CHINA ORGANZINE; WELL WEIGHTED."

(From the Author's Collection.)

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

(I) LIST OF MEMBERS returned to the various PARLIAMENTS for the CITY OF COVENTRY from A.D. 1295 upwards, collected from divers sources by the AUTHOR.

| <i>Parliaments called by</i> | <i>Date of Members return.</i> | <i>Place of Assembly.</i> | <i>Names of Members.</i> |
|------------------------------|---|---------------------------|--|
| EDWARD I. | 13th Nov., 1295 ... | Westminster ... | Aunketil de Coleshull ... Richard de Weston |
| | 25th May, 1298 ... | York ... | Robert Russel ... Robert Kelle |
| | 20th Jan., 1301 ... | Lincoln ... | Thomas Ballard ... Laurence de Schepey |
| | 29th Sept., 1302 ... | London ... | Ralph Tewe ... John Russel |
| | 16th Feb., 1304-5 ... | Westminster ... | Henry Bagot ... Peter Baron |
| | 30th May, 1306 ... | " | Alexander de Moubray ... Henry Bagot |
| | 20th Jan., 1306-7 ... | Carlisle | Alexander de Moubray ... Henry Bury |
| EDWARD II. | No returns found for several Parliaments of Edward II. | | |
| | 20th Jan., 1314 ... | Westminster ... | Richard le Spicer ... John de Langele |
| | 27th Jan., 1315 ... | Lincoln ... | Richard le Spicer ... John de Langele |
| | No returns found for several Parliaments | | |
| EDWARD III. | 20th Jan., 1327-8 ... | York ... | Andrew de Rydewar' |
| | Returns missing | | |
| | 18th Aug., 1337 ... | Westminster ... | John le Warde ... Roger le Hunte, and William Grauntpe |
| | 26th July, 1338 ... | Northampton ... | Jordan de Shepeye ... Roger le Bray |
| | No returns found | | |
| | 11th Sept., 1346 ... | Westminster ... | John de Percy ... Nicholas le Hunt |
| | No returns found | | |
| | 23rd Sept., 1353 ... | Westminster ... | Nicholas Michel ... Richard de Stoke |
| RICHARD II. | No returns found from 1354 to 1452, during 82 Parliaments | | |
| HENRY IV. | | | |
| HENRY V. | | | |
| HENRY VI. | 13th Feb., 1452-3 ... | Reading ... | William Elton * |
| | No returns found | | |
| EDWARD IV. | 3rd June, 1467 ... | Westminster ... | Henry Boteler |
| | 1st Sept., 1472 ... | " ... | Henry Boteler ... John Wyldegrise |
| | 16th Dec., 1477 ... | " ... | Henry Boteler ... John Wyldegrys |
| | Returns of various Parliaments missing | | |
| EDWARD V. | No Parliaments called | | |
| RICHARD III. | No returns found | | |
| HENRY VII. | 1485-6 ... | Westminster ... | Sir Robert Onley |
| | Returns of various Parliaments missing | | |

* Other name torn off.

The Parliamentary Representation

| <i>Parliaments called by</i> | <i>Date of Members return.</i> | <i>Place of Assembly.</i> | <i>Names of Members.</i> | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|------------------------|
| HENRY VIII. | 3rd Nov., 1529 ... | London... | Roger Wygston ... | John Bond |
| | 8th June, 1536 ... | Westminster ... | Roger Wygston ... | John Bond |
| | 28th April, 1539 ... | " ... | Henry Over ... | Christopher Warren |
| | 16th Jan., 1541-2 ... | " ... | Roger Wygston ... | Henry Over |
| | | | Edward Saunders, Sergt.- at-Law, <i>vice</i> Roger Wygston, deceased | |
| EDWARD VI. | 4th Oct., 1547 ... | Westminster ... | Christopher Warene ... | Henry Porter |
| | Feb., 1552-3 ... | " ... | James Rogers ... | John Talbouts * |
| MARY. ... | 11th Sept., 1553 ... | Westminster ... | John Nethermyll ... | Thomas Bonde |
| | Mar., 1554 ... | Oxford ... | Thomas Kyvet ... | Edward Dampert |
| PHILIP AND MARY. | 6th Nov., 1554 ... | Westminster ... | John Throkemarton,† Esq. | John Harford, Senior |
| | 8th Oct., 1555 ... | " ... | John Throkmorton, Esq. | Henry Porter, Gent. |
| | Jan., 1557-8 ... | " ... | John Throkmorton, Esq. | John Tallons, Gent. |
| ELIZABETH. | 1559 ... | Westminster ... | Thomas Dudley, Esq. | Richard Grafton, Esq. |
| | Jan., 1562-3 ... | " ... | Thomas Dudley, Esq. | Richard Grafton, Esq. |
| | April, 1570-1 ... | " ... | Henry Goodere, Esq. | Edmund Brownell, Gent. |
| | April, 1572 ... | " ... | Edmund Brownell, Gent. | Thomas Wright, Gent. |
| | | | Bartholomew Tate, Esq., <i>vice</i> Edmund Brownell, Gent., deceased | |
| | 27th Oct., 1584 ... | " ... | Edward Boughton, Esq. | Thomas Wight, Gent. |
| | Oct., 1586 ... | " ... | Thomas Saunders, Gent. | Henry Breeres, Gent. |
| | 22nd Oct., 1588-9 ... | " ... | Thomas Saunders, Gent. | Henry Breeres, Gent.* |
| | Feb., 1592-3 ... | " ... | Thomas Saunders, Gent. | John Myles, Gent. |
| | 13th Sept., 1597 ... | " ... | Henry Kervyn, Gent. | Thomas Saunders, Gent. |
| | 6th Oct., 1601 ... | " ... | Henry Breeres, Gent. | Thomas Saunders, Gent. |
| JAMES I. ... | 20th Feb., 1603-4 ... | Westminster ... | Henry Breeres, Gent. | John Rogerson, Gent. |
| | | | Sir John Harington, Kt., returned 5th March, <i>vice</i> John Rogerson, too infirm to attend Parliament, and Jno. Rogerson, again chosen <i>vice</i> Sir Jn. Harington being raised to the Upper House | |
| | April, 1614 ... | " ... | Sir Robert Coke, Kt. | Sampson Hopkins, Ald. |
| | 5th Dec., 1620-1 ... | " ... | Sampson Hopkins, Ald. | Henry Sewall, Ald. |
| | 27th Jan., 1623-4 ... | " ... | Sir Edward Coke, Kt. | Henry Harwell, Ald. |
| | | | A Privy Councillor, and Recorder of Coventry | |

* Returns defaced.

† Or Throcmorton.

| <i>Parliaments called by</i> | <i>Date of Members return.</i> | <i>Place of Assembly.</i> | <i>Names of Members.</i> |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| CHARLES I. | May, 1625 ... | Westminster ... | Sir Edward Coke, Knt, Henry Harwell, Ald. Recorder of Coventry, who elected to serve for Norfolk County |
| | Jan., 1626 ... | „ ... | Henry Harwell, Ald. ... Isaac Walden, Ald. |
| | 1627-8 ... | „ ... | William Purefoy, Esq. ... Richard Green, Esq.* |
| | 31st Mar., 1640 ... | „ ... | William Jesson, Ald. ... Simon Norton, Ald. |
| | 13th Oct., 1640 ... | „ ... | John Barker, Ald. ... Simon Norton, Ald. William Jesson, Ald., <i>vice</i> Simon Norton, Ald., 20th July, 1641 |
| INTER- REGNUM. | 12th July, 1654 ... | Westminster ... | William Purefoy, Esq. ... Robert Beake, Esq. |
| | Sept, 1656 ... | „ ... | William Purefoy, Esq. ... Robert Beake, Esq. |
| | Jan., 1659 ... | „ ... | William Purefoy, Esq. ... Robert Beake, Esq. |
| | 1660 ... | „ ... | William Jesson, Ald. ... John Barker, Ald. Again on the re-assembling of the Long Parliament of 1640 |
| CHARLES II. | 13th Mar., 1660 ... | Westminster ... | Robert Beake, Esq. ... Richard Hopkins, Esq. 14th Aug., 1660. William Jesson, Esq., and Richard Hopkins, Esq., <i>vice</i> Robert Beake, Esq., and Richard Hopkins, Esq., previously returned, whose elections had been declared void |
| | 15th April, 1661 ... | „ ... | Sir Clement Fisher, Bart.... Thomas Flynt, Esq., Sergeant-at-Law † Richard Hopkins, Esq., <i>vice</i> Thos. Flynt, Esq., deceased, 1st Nov., 1670 |
| | 11th Feb., 1678-9 ... | „ ... | Richard Hopkins, Esq. ... Robert Beake, Esq.† |
| | 26th Aug., 1679 ... | „ ... | Richard Hopkins, Esq. ... John Stratford, Esq. |
| | 8th Feb., 1680-1 ... | „ ... | Richard Hopkins, Esq. ... John Stratford, Esq. |
| JAMES II. | 17th Mar., 1685 ... | Westminster ... | Sir Roger Cave, Bart. ... Sir Thomas Norton, Bart. |
| CONVENTION. | 9th Jan., 1688-9 ... | Westminster ... | Sir Roger Cave, Bart. ... John Stratford, Esq. |
| WILLIAM AND MARY. | 11th Mar., 1689-90 ... | Westminster ... | Richard Hopkins, Esq. ... John Stratford, Esq. |
| | 19th Nov., 1695 ... | „ ... | George Bohun, Esq. ... Thomas Gery, Esq. |
| | 26th July, 1698 ... | „ ... | Sir Christopher Hales, Bt. Richard Hopkins, Esq. |
| WILLIAM. | 7th Jan., 1700-1 ... | Westminster ... | Sir Christopher Hales, Bt. Thomas Hopkins, Esq. |
| | 24th Dec., 1701 ... | „ ... | Sir Christopher Hales, Bt.‡ Edward Hopkins, Esq. |

* Double return. The indenture by which Mr. Isaac Walden and another were returned, was taken off the file by order of the House on 9th April, 1628.

† Two indentures.

‡ Return amended by order of House, 24th February, 1702, the name of Henry Neale, Esq., erased, and that of Sir Christopher Hales, Bart., inserted.

of the City of Coventry.—Appendix.

v.

| <i>Parliaments called by</i> | <i>Date of Members return.</i> | <i>Place of Assembly.</i> | <i>Names of Members.</i> |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| GEORGE III. | 26th Mar., 1761 ... | Westminster ... | Hon. Andrew Archer ... James Hewitt, Esq., Sergeant-at-Law |
| | | | 17th Nov., 1766. Hon. Hy. Seymour Conway, <i>vice</i> Jas. Hewitt, Esq., appointed a Justice of the King's Bench |
| | 16th Mar., 1768 ... | " ... | Hon. Andrew Archer ... Hon. H. Seymour Conway |
| | | | 1st Dec., 1768. Sir Richard Glyn, Kt., and Bart., <i>vice</i> Hon. Andrew Archer, called to the Upper House |
| | | | 25th Jan., 1773. Walter Waring, Esq., <i>vice</i> Sir Richard Glyn, deceased |
| | 8th Oct., 1774 ... | " ... | Edward Roe Yeo, Esq. ... Walter Waring, Esq. |
| | | | 15th Feb., 1780. Jno. Baker Holroyd, Esq., <i>vice</i> Walter Waring, Esq., deceased |
| | 29th Nov., 1780 ... | " ... | Edward Roe Yeo, Esq. ... Jno. Baker Holroyd, Lord Sheffield, in the Kingdom of Ireland * |
| | | | 18th Jan., 1783. William Seymour Conway, Esq., <i>vice</i> Edward Roe Yeo, deceased |
| | 16th April, 1784 ... | " ... | Sir Sampson Gideon, Bart. John Wilmot, Esq. |
| | 19th June, 1790 ... | " ... | Sir Sampson Eardley, Bart., John Wilmot, Esq. Baron Eardley, of the King- dom of Ireland |
| | 28th May, 1796 ... | " ... | Wm. Wilberforce Bird, Esq. Nathaniel Jefferys, Esq. |
| | 17th July, 1802 ... | " ... | Francis Wm. Barlow, Esq. Nathaniel Jefferys, Esq. |
| | | | 30th March, 1803. Peter Moore, Esq., <i>vice</i> Nathaniel Jefferys, Esq., whose elec- tion was declared void |
| | | | 21st May, 1805. William Mills, Esq., <i>vice</i> Francis Wm. Barlow, Esq., decd. |
| GEORGE IV. | 29th Oct., 1806 ... | " ... | Peter Moore, Esq. ... William Mills, Esq. |
| | 9th May, 1807 ... | " ... | Peter Moore, Esq. ... William Mills, Esq. |
| | 5th Oct., 1812 ... | " ... | Peter Moore, Esq. ... Joseph Butterworth, Esq. |
| | 25th June, 1818 ... | " ... | Peter Moore, Esq. ... Edward Ellice, Esq. |
| | 15th Mar., 1820 ... | Westminster ... | Edward Ellice, Esq. ... Peter Moore, Esq. |
| | 19th June, 1826 ... | " ... | Richd. Edensor Heathcote, Thomas Bilcliffe Fyler, Esq. Esq. |

* The following note appears in "the return of Parliaments": "The only documents found among the ordinary Writs and Returns are a Writ with a certificate thereto attached, dated the 26th October, 1780, by which Thomas Noxon and Thomas Butler, Sheriffs of Coventry, returned that, owing to riots, they were unable to proceed with the election. The Writ attached to the single Return, wherein the names of Edward Roe Yeo, Esq., and John, Lord Sheffield, in the Kingdom of Ireland, are found, commences thus: 'Whereas no Citizens have been elected for your said City (Coventry) for our present Parliament, begun at our City of Westminster the 31st day of October last past, and there now holden, by means whereof our subjects of our said City are deprived of two Citizens to treat for the benefit of the same City,' an election is thereupon ordered. Return amended by order of the House, dated 27th February, 1781, by erasing the names of Sir Thomas Hallifax, Kt., and Thomas Rogers, Esq., and substituting those of Edward Roe Yeo, Esq., and John, Lord Sheffield, in the Kingdom of Ireland."

The Parliamentary Representation

| <i>Parliaments called by</i> | <i>Date of Members return.</i> | <i>Place of Assembly.</i> | <i>Names of Members.</i> |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| WILLIAM IV. | 31st July, 1830 ... | Westminster ... | Thos. Bilcliffe Fyler, Esq. Edward Ellice, Esq. |
| | 4th May, 1831 ... | " ... | Edward Ellice, Esq. ... Hy. Lytton Bulwer, Esq. |
| | 10th Dec., 1832 ... | " ... | Edward Ellice, Esq. ... Hy. Lytton Bulwer, Esq. |
| | | | 13th April, 1833. Edward Ellice, Esq., re-elected after appointment as Secretary at War |
| | 8th Jan., 1835 ... | " ... | William Williams, Esq. ... Edward Ellice, Esq. |
| VICTORIA. | 24th July, 1837 ... | Westminster ... | Edward Ellice, Esq. ... William Williams, Esq. |
| | 29th June, 1841 ... | " ... | Edward Ellice, Esq. ... William Williams, Esq. |
| | 29th July, 1847 ... | " ... | Edward Ellice, Esq. ... George Jas. Turner, Esq. |
| | | | 8th April, 1851. Charles Geach, Esq., <i>vice</i> George Jas. Turner, Esq. appointed Vice-Chancellor |
| | 6th July, 1852 ... | " ... | Edward Ellice, Esq. ... Charles Geach, Esq. |
| | | | 2nd Dec., 1854. Sir Joseph Paxton, Knt., <i>vice</i> Charles Geach, Esq., deceased |
| | 27th Mar., 1857 ... | " ... | Edward Ellice, Esq. ... Sir Joseph Paxton, Kt. |
| | 30th April, 1859 ... | " ... | Edward Ellice, Esq. ... Sir Joseph Paxton, Kt. |
| | | | 8th Oct., 1863. Morgan Treherne, Esq., <i>vice</i> Edward Ellice, deceased |
| | | | 21st June, 1865. Henry William Eaton, Esq., <i>vice</i> Sir Joseph Paxton, Knt., deceased |
| | 12th July, 1865 ... | " ... | Morgan Treherne, Esq. ... Henry Wm. Eaton, Esq. |
| | | | 23rd July, 1867. Henry Mather Jackson, Esq., <i>vice</i> Morgan Treherne, Esq., deceased |
| | | | 26th March, 1868. Samuel Carter, Esq., <i>vice</i> Henry Mather Jackson, Esq., whose election was declared void |
| | 17th Nov., 1868 ... | " ... | Henry William Eaton, Esq. Alex. Staveley Hill, Esq. |
| | 5th Feb., 1874 ... | " ... | Henry William Eaton, Esq. Hy. Mather Jackson, Esq. |
| | 31st Mar., 1880 ... | " ... | Sir Hy. Mather Jackson, Bt. Wm. Henry Wills, Esq. |
| | | | 12th March, 1881. Henry William Eaton, Esq., <i>vice</i> Sir Henry Mather Jackson, Bart., appointed a Judge |
| | 24th Nov., 1885 ... | " ... | Henry William Eaton, Esq.* |

* By the Redistribution Bill, following the new Reform Act, Coventry was deprived of one seat in the House of Commons, as it was under the 50,000 borough population limit, its inhabitants being 47,366, and electorate 9,028.

| <i>Parliaments called by</i> | <i>Date of Members return.</i> | <i>Place of Assembly.</i> | <i>Names of Members.</i> |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| VICTORIA (continued). | 2nd July, 1886 ... | .. | ... Henry William Eaton, Esq. |
| | | | 9th July, 1887. William Henry Walter Ballantine, Esq., <i>vice</i> Henry William Eaton, Esq., who accepted the Stewardship of the Manor of Northstead, Co. York, and was created Baron Cheylesmore |
| | 4th July, 1892 ... | .. | ... William Henry Walter Ballantine, Esq. |

II. ANCIENT AND MODERN SEALS OF COVENTRY. (*See frontispiece.*)

Sir William Dugdale records that King Edward III., by Letters Patent, bearing date 20th January, 18th Edward III. (1345), did make a Corporation at Coventry, "consisting of a Mayor and Bayliffs, which the inhabitants should have power to choose and make out of themselves yearly;" and "for the better tranquility of the said inhabitants, and of all merchants repaying thither, the King then granted that from thenceforth there should be a *Common Seal*, by his Royal direction, consisting of two pieces, according to custome, for recognizances of debts there, according to the form of the Statutes—Merchant, made and published: The greater part whereof to remain in the custody of the Major (Mayor) for the time being, and the lesser in the hands of a certain Clerk, to be there deputed by the said King, his heirs and successors, according to the tenure of the said Statutes. And that the said Major and Clerk from thenceforth should receive recognizances of debts according to the tenure of those Statutes." The Corporation still possess the dies of this ancient Seal, with those of the smaller Seals, from which, by permission of the Town Clerk of Coventry, Lewis Beard, Esq., the impressions were taken of the first five in the *Frontispiece*.

1. The Obverse of the Great, or *Common Seal*, which has been defaced at some time or other in the upper portion of the Castle and the legend, is about two inches in diameter, and most interesting. It bears the City Arms—an Elephant and Castle. The Elephant is collared and caparisoned, and bears on its back a triple-towered Castle, with drawbridge lowered and entrance gateway open. From the central tower, a flag, bearing three ostrich feathers, is flying. The Elephant is represented in a meadow, with two bushy-topped trees (not unlike pines), one on either side. That the artist here probably intended a rebus on the Town's name is evident, as the border and legend are discontinued at the top of the Seal, and the pictorial, or heraldic part is represented in a *cove*, or

small recess, for the first portion; whilst the *tree*, or trees, allude to the latter part. The legend, now much broken, reads—

" * Sīg[ill]um : maio[rat]us :
[ciū]itatis : [cou]entriæ * "

A description will be found of a copy of this Seal in the "Catalogue of Seals in the British Museum," Vol. II., p. 61 (4847), from a Charter of 1618, and there is a drawing of it in S. Lewis' *Topog'r Dict'y*, Vol. I., p. 691.

2. The Reverse bears the head of the King, full-faced, crowned, with a collar of six small quatre-foils around the neck; on the breast the lion of England; in the field, on either side, is an oak tree of three branches, or clusters, fructed with acorns; above, on either side, is a small six-pointed star. The Seal is nearly two inches in diameter, and the legend around reads—

" * S' EDWARDI REG' ANGL' AD RECGN'
DEBITOR' APU' COVETRE "

This Seal is described in the "Catalogue of Seals in the British Museum," under "Royal Seals," "pro recognitione debitorum," Vol. I., p. 143 (1071).

3. This smaller Corporate Seal is one inch and three-sixteenths in diameter, and bears the legend—

" * CIVITAS * COVENTRIÆ "

with an Elephant (caparisoned) and Castle (triple-towered, domed, and flagged).

4 and 5. These smaller Seals, also in the possession of the Corporation of Coventry, bear the City Arms, and one of them the letters C C. Their date is unknown.

The copies from impressions of ancient Coventry Seals, 6, 7, and 8, are given by the permission of F. Bird, Esq.

6. This Seal (or Crest) is one inch and a quarter in diameter, and bears for its legend—

" * SIGILLUM COVENTREIE "

It shows, apparently, a Cat-a-Mountain, or wild cat, the City's Crest, over which is a triple-boughed tree, fructed.

7. This Seal shows the Elephant bearing a Castle on its back—the latter with battlements, door closed, and portcullis raised. A central tower rises above the others, the side towers have a sort of crenellated ornament around them, and a star over each. A tree proceeds from the ground in a single stem behind the Elephant, and, branching to either side, finishes there in three boughs or leafy clusters. The Seal is two inches and a half in diameter, and bears the legend—

" * SIGILLUM · COMUNITATIS ·
VILLE · DE · COVENTRE · "

8. The Reverse shows the winged figure of

St. Michael (or St. George) slaying a dragon, holding a lance in the right hand, with point thrust into the dragon's mouth; on the left arm is a shield bearing a cross. The field is ornamented with boughs; the Seal and legend are as in the last. The date of these Seals is unknown.

It appears that in the year 1859, the legend on the modern Seal of the Corporation was altered from "The Mayor, Aldermen, and Burgesses of the City of Coventry, 1836," to "The Mayor, Aldermen, and Citizens of the City of Coventry, MDCCCXXXVI." The present modern Seal is about two inches and three-quarters in diameter, and has the City Coat of Arms and Crest in the centre, with the following legend—"The Mayor, Aldermen, and Citizens of the City of Coventry, 18 Edward III."

III. EIGHTEENTH CENTURY CHRONICLES.

The earliest known of those peculiar broadsheets called "Chronicles" which have been found, records certain local events and particulars of an election at Coventry in 1746 and 1747 (*see page 156, line 34*), and copies from bills once in the possession of W. Hone, Esq., have been inserted in reduced fac-simile in this work in *Appendix, p. ix*. These Chronicles are interesting, and contain a considerable amount of wit and humour. The next Chronicle embraces a period of from 1760 to 1776, and is here produced, with explanatory footnotes. (*See page 160, line 19*.) John Jones, the Coventry printer, of Cross Cheaping, was a "Tory" and "Jacobite," and the Chronicle quaintly describes his view of the proceedings of the Whig Council House. This Chronicle

he published at the low sum of one penny per chapter, as issued, and the whole afterwards appears to have been reprinted. He also published many other political matters, and having issued an edition of Sir William Dugdale's "Antiquities of Warwickshire," in numbers, printed the portion relating to the City in a separate volume, entitled "The Antiquities of Coventre," in 1765. He is described as carrying on business "facing the Cross." In the handbill, "A Celebrated Farce" (*page 224*), he is quaintly called "that enterprising author, Johnny Jones, of infamous memory," but little beyond is known of the worthy printer. His production from 1760 to 1776 reads as follows, and is entitled:—

“THE CHRONICLES OF THE TIMES

AT COVENTRY DURING THE REIGN OF NEBUCHADNEZZAR THE THIRD,
KING OF UTOPIA.”

CHAPTER I.

Verse 1. **N**O sooner was it known that Nebuchadnezzar the Second,* King of Utopia,† was dead, and that his grandson, Nebuchadnezzar the Third‡ was Proclaimed, in the Capital, King in his stead, but there was great mourning and lamentation among the Chiefs and Elders.

2. Now be it known the deceased King had done these People many favours; and they frequently were wont to flatter and send up Addresses of congratulation, if any victory was obtained, or Addresses of condolence, at any melancholy event, or at the loss of any of his royal family.

3. And behold, the Wise Men and the Elders assembled together, saying, What is to be done? It behoves us, let our hearts yearn which way they will, that we do put on appareances of gladness, and do our duty, by Proclaiming the new King cheerfully and with pomp.

4. And they cried out with one voice, You have spoken well; let us do the new King honour, and perchance it may lead him to continue his grandfather's kindness upon us and upon our posterity.

5. And they accordingly assembled themselves together at their Council House, putting themselves in proper array; and they appeared in scarlet gowns and black gowns,

6. And they sent and requested the other bodies of respectable men, consisting of several companies, to attend them,

7. And they all set out in form, perambulating the different streets of the City in great pomp.

8. They were attended by sundry kinds of music, with the City flags and streamers, and with the flags and streamers belonging to the different companies,

9. And behold, as they passed along, they shouted with shouts, and cried out mightily, Long live NEBUCHADNEZZAR the Third, KING OF UTOPIA; God save KING Nebuchadnezzar; long may he reign!

10. In the evening of the same day they assembled at the Senate House; and the Chiefs and Elders entertained the people with punch and wine; and they were merry.

11. And it came to pass that a certain Elder said to another, who was seated next to him, on his right hand side, I'll drink his Majesty Nebuchadnezzar the Third's good health, wishing he may live to reign many years.

12. But he was stopped from drinking by his brother Elder, who said, Hold: it will be time enough to drink his Majesty's health when you have seen how he turns out.

13. Now this Elder, whose name was Ezekiel.§ was stricken in years, and had remarkable flaxen hair; and great respect was paid to what he had said,

14. And his brother Elders were struck with great surprise, saying, What does our elder brother Ezekiel mean?

15. Ezekiel answered and said unto them, Hold your peace: I will unfold my mind concerning this matter at some other time; and they held their peace; and they did not drink King Nebuchadnezzar the Third's health.

16. And it came to pass, the Friday next after what had happened, that Ezekiel spoke unto his Brethren, and said,

17. Know ye, that King Nebuchadnezzar the Third is no well-wisher to us and the men of our persuasion, and that he will turn out all our old friends and good men from his Council, and bring in the plaguy Steeple-house Crew: for it is said he will prove a Tory.

18. Take heed, therefore, what you do, for the ground you now tread upon is slippery, so that it may be compared unto glass.

19. And they looked wishfully at Ezekiel, and seemed much dismayed; and they communed with one another, saying, We will be cautious and secret in all our doings.

20. Now be it known that these Chief Men and Elders did not follow the Religion as by law established in UTOPIA, but set up every man his own opinion, and frequented different Meeting Houses and Conventicles,

21. And they distinguished themselves by the name of Whigs, and they had a great hatred to those people who were called TORIES, insomuch that they were an abomination unto them.

22. Behold, it came to pass that Nebuchadnezzar the Third took unto himself a Princess of Germany for his Queen,

23. And the Chiefs and Elders seemed well pleased at this thing, believing her Majesty (being a German) would secure the favour of her Royal consort to be conferred upon them, after the same manner as his deceased German Majesty had been wont to confer favours upon them.

24. Albeit they were mistaken, as will be shewn in the next Chapter.

* George II.

† Great Britain.

‡ George III.

§ Alderman Kendrick.

CHAPTER II.

Verse 1. **K**ING NEBUCHADNEZZAR THE THIRD having assembled his Counsellors and the great men of the nation together, methods were suggested to lessen the expenses of the State,

2. And it was proposed that the money that had usually been issued from the Treasury for the benefit of the Dissenting Clergymen should be stopped, and King Nebuchadnezzar the Third readily consented, saying, To allow the Dissenters TOLERATION was sufficient, without paying them an annual tribute to keep from the Established Church of Utopia.

3. And this proved very grievous to the Chiefs and Elders of the City, and they were sorely vexed,

4. And behold, Ezekiel the Elder stood up among them, saying, Now, brethren, the time is come that fulfils the fears and doubts I expressed concerning the new King, Nebuchadnezzar the Third.

5. And Ezekiel the Elder could not refrain from tears; he reclined his head on the table, and fainted,

6. And the rest of the Chiefs and Elders were so much affected that they cried and groaned most hideously, so that the noise was heard afar off.

7. And behold, after a short time they recovered themselves, when one of the Tribe, who, from having accustomed himself to rub his brow, was called **KNOBBY**,* spake and said unto them,

8. Be of cheerful spirits, and comfort yourselves, for though we have lost the good old KING, our worthy friend the Noble Lord of **UMBERSLADE**† is yet alive, and has a seat in the Upper House of the Grand Assembly of the Nation, and he will whisper to his Brother Nobles in our behalf, and our good friend 'Squire James, the learned Serjeant, will assist us all in his power with his counsel and advice.

9. And it came to pass that Ezekiel the Elder revived from his faintness at hearing these words, and took Knobby by the hand, and said, Thou hast spoken well.

10. And Knobby said, Friends and masters all, I will propose a health; so charge your glasses.

11. And they filled their glasses with wine.

12. And Knobby took his glass in his hand and said, Come, here's to the pious memory of **OLIVER CROMWELL**, wishing he may rise again and become **NEBUCHADNEZZAR** the Fourth.

13. And the Assembly drank off their glasses—yea, every one—and were pleased with what Knobby had said.

14. And they afterwards communed with one another, saying, What is to be done? when one of the Chiefs arose and said, Let us send messengers to the Lord of **UMBERSLADE**, and to 'Squire James, our learned Serjeant-at-Law, and peradventure they will devise somewhat for our safety.

15. And they cried out with one voice, Let it be so.

16. And the messengers were sent accordingly unto them.

17. And the messengers returned, saying, We have glad tidings for you: our Noble Masters will come.

18. Behold, it came to pass, on the seventh day after what had happened, that the Noble Lord of **UMBERSLADE**, with his son, the Honourable Andrew,‡ accompanied with 'Squire James,§ arrived in the City.

19. When their arrival was known, the Chiefs and Elders, and all that were in office or authority, immediately assembled at the Council House.||

20. And they put on scarlet gowns and black gowns, each according to the office or authority he bore.

21. And Knobby was despatched to the Inn with a most respectful message to the noble Lord of **UMBERSLADE**, his son, the Honourable Andrew, and 'Squire James, the learned Serjeant, humbly requesting their attendance.

22. And they accordingly repaired to the Council House with every possible respect,

23. And the Chief of the Elders** (who, from his importance, was named Sir John) addressed them, and expressed the dreadful apprehensions he and his Brethren laboured under at the conduct of King Nebuchadnezzar the Third, beseeching their kind assistance and advice,

24. And the Lord of **UMBERSLADE** took his Worship by the hand and said, Be not any of you in the least discomforted or dismayed; I ever was, and ever will be, a friend to the **OLIVERIAN** and **RUMP** System.

25. And I (said 'Squire Andrew, his Lordship's son,) will be your hearty good friend.

26. And 'Squire James said, My abilities, with integrity, shall ever be exerted in your service.

CHAPTER III.

Verse 1. **A**ND 'Squire James, the learned Serjeant, said unto the Chiefs and Elders, Let your hearts be no longer sad, but put on the looks of pleasantness: I have many things to tell that will give you satisfaction.

2. Behold, the time is now approaching that shall make you laugh them to scorn that now hold you in derision and contemptuously treat you.

3. Pursue but the plan I have formed, and shall hereafter communicate to you, and you shall raise for me a ladder whereby I may climb to the pinnacle of glory, and I will secure to you and your posterity a much greater enjoyment of power and wealth than ever your forefathers enjoyed,

4. And by the power I shall procure for you, you shall keep those in opposition to you, your avowed enemies the Steeple-house Crew, in opposition and in a state of subservience unto you.

5. And you shall overcome them, and they shall bow down unto you; and these things shall come to pass, and be fully accomplished within seven years.

6. At these sayings the Chiefs and Elders and all the whole assembly were exceedingly well pleased, and put on cheerful countenances, smiling, and conversing with one another,

* John Shaw, father of Matthew Shaw.
§ James Hewitt, Esq., Serjeant-at-Law.

† Thomas, Lord Archer.
|| St. Mary's Hall.

‡ The Hon. Andrew Archer.
** John Hewitt, Alderman and Mayor, 1760-1.

7. And his Worship SIR JOHN called for wine, and the whole assembly drank thanks to the Noble Lord of Umberslade and his son, and to their learned Serjeant.

8. They continued drinking for some time, and they became exceedingly merry.

9. Behold, at length Ezekiel arose and said, My Lord and worthy brethren, my heart has been so overjoyed at the good things I have this day heard with my INWARD ears that I was unable to speak until now,

10. And I beg you will pledge me whilst I unfold my thoughts in a bumper.

11. And KNOBBY cried out, Charge your glasses, and they filled their glasses.

12. And Ezekiel took his glass in his hand and said, Here is to the speedy raising of the ladder, and may the pinnacle of glory be lasting; and may the additional OPPRESSIVE power of the Corporation and their wealth continue till AFTER the world is at an end.

13. And Knobby said, Bless your Worship's pious and devout thoughts.

14. And they were all well pleased with Ezekiel, and shewed their respect unto him, huzzaing three times and stamping their feet on the ground.

15. And after a time they became serious, when 'Squire James, the learned Serjeant of the Law, arose and said,

16. Behold, before I leave your company I have somewhat of importance to communicate to you, and desire your earnest attention.

17. And they hearkened very attentively.

18. And 'Squire James spake and said unto them, Above all things, let me beseech you not to let your hatred and dislike of Nebuchadnezzar the Third be known to any man but yourselves, but keep all secret, least your enemies take advantage of you,

19. And because such knowledge would work against the great designs I have in view for your future power and greatness.

20. Wherefore your Worships cannot dissemble too much, and the art of DISSIMILATION you know how to practise.

21. Let every possible preparation be made, and spare no expense in professions of loyalty on that day, let your thoughts be what they will.

22. And let the bells be set a-ringing as soon as the signs of day appear, and let them continue ringing until midnight.

23. Let there be tabors and pipes and bands of music provided; wear favors in honour of the day, and walk in the procession through the principal streets of the City.

24. And make no distinction of Parties on that day, but seem in friendship with all around you.

25. Invite all the Companies of the City to accompany you, and encourage private Bodies of Gentlemen, or different Club Societies, to fall into your train, doing everything to make it as formidable as possible.

CHAPTER IV.

Verse 1. **L**ET your streamers and colours (continued 'Squire James, the learned Serjeant,) be displayed in the air, and huzza, shout, and rejoice as you pass along, and sing songs of joy in Praise of the King and Queen.

2. And when you repair to the Mayor's Senate House, make the people welcome, and let their hearts be made glad with wine and with punch.

3. Give liquor to the populace—nay, let the channels run down with strong drink, and the conduits with wine,

4. And in the evening let there be grand fireworks, and let the pictures of the King and Queen be affixed thereto.

5. Let there be wheel-rockets, sky-rockets, and squibs and crackers, and the firing of guns and pistols on the occasion,

6. And let every house in the City be illuminated with candles of wax and with candles of tallow.

7. And EZEKIEL said, The outside of my house shall be illuminated with candles of tallow, but the inside shall be illuminated with RUSH-LIGHTS.

8. And 'Squire James said, Let all things I have mentioned be performed, and it will forward my great designs,

9. Then Sir John, the Mayor, arose and said, I pledge, worthy cousin, for myself and the rest of my brethren, that all you have desired shall be done; nay, I will do more, for I will invite the ladies to dance with me.

10. And the Lord of Umberslade said, 'Squire James, the learned Serjeant, has advised you well; do as he has recommended, and I will contribute handsomely towards the expense.

11. And his Lordship said, Neither me nor my son can partake of your festivity in the City on the Coronation Day, as we must attend in our places at Court.

12. And 'Squire James said, It will be expected that I make my appearance and express my loyalty there also.

13. Having thus spoken, the Lord of Umberslade, his son the Honourable Andrew, and 'Squire James, took leave and departed, promising in a short time to pay another visit.

14. And on the Coronation Day* (agreeable to the advice of 'Squire James), his Worship the Mayor and the Chiefs and Elders solemnized it in the manner desired,

15. And his Worship Sir John, as he had said, invited the Ladies to a dance at the Hall of the Senators, which commenced as soon as the fireworks and illuminations were over.

16. His Worship the Mayor walked in procession to the Hall, preceded with torches, and with tabors and pipes and other music,

17. And his Worship entertained the Ladies and the other company with dancing and music till midnight, when his Worship left the Hall, and returned

in procession, after the manner he went unto it, being warm with wine and dancing, nothing more material happening during this national festivity, which was thought somewhat remarkable.

18. For behold, on a former night of rejoicing, as Sir John was returning home from the Senate House, there stood in the Public street an empty CART :

19. And the multitude that were about him said, And please your Worship, this CART is a Nuisance, for it obstructs the passage.

20. And they cried out, Whose CART is it ?

21. And it was answered and said, It belongs to BENJAMIN the BRICKMAKER.*

22. Now this BENJAMIN was a TORY,

23. And his Worship Sir John ordered the cart to be taken before the door of the Senate House and BURNT.

24. And the cart was accordingly set on fire and burnt to ashes,

25. And the people marvelled greatly at this extraordinary proceeding.

CHAPTER V.

Verse 1. **A**ND as the end of the Mayoralty of Sir John was nearly accomplished, his Worship was pleased to call a Council-House, and swore in a number of young Freemen on the last day of his Mayoralty,

2. And indeed, his Worship had at different times this year called Council-Houses for the swearing of Freemen, which gained him popularity amongst the young men.

3. But behold, this was not pleasing to many of the Chiefs and Elders,

4. For they murmured, saying, This is only a temporary method of raising money, and in the end will prove impolitic and detrimental to our interests,

5. For behold, by this frequent public method of swearing Freemen, we are under the necessity of admitting our enemies the Blues, as well as those of our own party the Yellows,

6. By which means, when an Election may approach, we shall find ourselves outnumbered, which will prove grievous,

7. Whereas, according to our former method of proceeding, when our Council-Houses were called privately, we admitted such only that would faithfully promise to serve us when we wanted them, and do anything we ordered them.

8. On which Ezekiel, the Elder, cried out, Right ! Right ! Private swearing is the best swearing, and then we know our men. Do you understand me ?

9. And Knobby said, Yes, Master, you speak plain enough ; and I insist upon it, Back Door Freemen are our best friends. Was it not mortifying to you all to see that JACOBITE TORY, JONES, the Printer, sworn to-day ? I am sure, if it had been at a private

Council-House, our HONEST Inspectors would never have admitted him, for he is sure always to be against us.

10. And the following day after the swearing of the young Freemen being Sunday, the fifth day of the eleventh month, and in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar the Third, his Worship Sir John resigned the office of Chief Magistrate,

11. And he was succeeded in that dignity by a weaver named L——M.†

12. Now this old man had served at a critical time the office of Sheriff, and acquitted himself during an Election to the full satisfaction of the Chiefs and Elders by doing everything they ordered him, by which means they obtained their point.

13. Therefore, by way of gratitude, and to induce other succeeding tools, it was thought politic to choose him to the office of Chief Magistrate.

14. Albeit, at the time of nomination (notwithstanding the deserts of the old man), great doubts and fears were started about the safety of the Sword and Mace, provided it should be left in his possession during his Mayoralty.

15. However, to get over this impediment, it was agreed that on any public occasion, when it was necessary that the Sword and Mace should be carried, that they should be privately taken to his house previous to the procession, and when the same was over, that they should secretly be conveyed away and lodged in more secure custody.

16. So prudently and cautiously did the wise men, the Chiefs and Elders proceed ; for behold, they remembered that at a former time, when a man of POVERTY was elected Mayor, and was entrusted with the City Regalia, that he sold the same and kept the money.

17. However, unfortunately for old Mr. L——m, the honour conferred upon him by the Chiefs and Elders proved fatal to him, for having from necessity lived an abstemious life, on becoming his Worship the Mayor, he of course fell into a state of voluptuousness, which in three months occasioned his death, so that his honour proved short-lived.‡

18. But in order to make some atonement to his family for their loss, the Chiefs and Elders were pleased to appoint the deceased Worship's son to be Mace-bearer.

19. And the important office of Mayor being now become vacant, Alderman UP-BRINDLE, Alias TRIP-BRINDLE,§ a Senior of the Quorum, was appointed for the remainder of the year.

20. Now notwithstanding the oddity of this Gentleman's name, viz., UP-BRINDLE, Alias TRIP-BRINDLE, yet he was a good old man. To be sure, it was said in the former part of his life that he was very fond of his cattle, and if he perceived his neighbour had a better pasture than his own, he would drive them in, saying to his cows, Up Brindle, Trip Brindle, very good ground.

* Benjamin Newland.

† Richard Langham, worsted weaver. Mayor 1761.

‡ Mayor Langham died between

24th February and 25th March, 1762.

§ Thomas Brockhurst, Alderman, chosen Mayor instead.

CHAPTER VI.

Verse 1. **H**OWEVER, in justice to his Worship UP-BRINDLE, alias TRIP-BRINDLE, be it said that though in his early days he might now and then trespass a little, yet, in the latter part of his time, he acquitted himself as a gentleman and Christian, having done many acts of humanity, charity and benevolence.

2. During the time of his Mayoralty, he every Sunday regularly attended divine service at the Established Church, where he went in procession with solemnity and pomp, being preceded with the Sword and Mace and other Regalia, accompanied by some others of the Chiefs and Elders and by his servants.

3. Now this public attendance with the Sword and Mace to Church was seldom or ever practised in any other Mayoralty except that of his Worship's Sir John, who, indeed, constantly visited the Church on a Sunday, and acquitted himself very respectfully.

4. And it happened this year, in the eighth month of the year, that the Queen of King Nebuchadnezzar the Third was safely delivered of a Prince,* being her Majesty's first-born, on which joyful occasion his Worship Mr. Up-Brindle, alias Trip-Brindle, assembled the Chiefs and Elders of the People together at the Senate House, and entertained them plentifully, with great rejoicings.

5. And during the remainder of his Worship's Mayoralty, when any news arrived of a victory being obtained, he gave grand entertainments and made great rejoicings in honour of his Majesty's arms and the Kingdom in general.

6. Now it came to pass that the learned Serjeant, 'Squire James, paid a visit to the Chiefs and Elders,

7. And on his arrival in the City, he was received with great joy by the whole Tribe.

8. But before any other business was proceeded upon, it was mentioned by Ezekiel that the Coventry Landlords, at the late Warwick Races, had impudently insulted the Honourable Andrew, on account of his Honour's bills, and the bills of the learned Serjeant, contracted at the Election, not being paid.

9. Now be it known that at the General Election, which happened within six months after the death of King Nebuchadnezzar the Second, that the Honourable Andrew and the learned Serjeant, 'Squire James, were elected Members to represent the City in Parliament,† when, by Corporation influence, the worthy, disinterested W. Groves, Esq., was thrown out, after having, with unbiassed and irreproachable integrity, sat in the House of Commons twenty years.

10. And this event proved very mortifying to the Tories, and occasioned the Whigs to rejoice exceedingly.

11. But to proceed, Ezekiel continued to say, That it was his wish that a method might be pursued to quiet the clamorous Publicans on account of their Election bills, for the scandalous reports they daily spread proved very disgraceful, not only to the two Members, but to the whole Tribe, their supporters.

12. And the learned Serjeant, 'Squire James, arose and said, That as for his part, he was ready and willing to pay his share whenever the Honourable Andrew, his Brother Colleague, should consent to pay his moiety.

13. On this, arose up one of the City Bailiffs, a Retailer of Drams, by name G. P.,‡ and he said, With humble submission to you all, I cannot but give it as my opinion that the Landlords in general have made false charges, and therefore think it unreasonable they should expect their full demands.

14. I therefore propose that the Publicans be summoned to attend on a certain day at the Hall of the large Senate House with their bills,

15. And I further propose that after the rate of ten shillings in the pound be paid them, and no more, and that if any refuse to give a receipt in full of all demands on such terms, let him not be paid a farthing.

16. Great attention was paid to the motions and proposals of the honest and conscientious G. P., the City Bailiff, and though some obstacles were at first started, yet the qualms of conscience were soon got over, and it was determined as G. P. had proposed.

17. And on the Thursday in the week following was the day fixed for the Publicans to attend, and they accordingly did attend with their bills, in expectation of being fully paid.

18. Albeit they were egregiously mistaken, for no more than one Landlord at a time was admitted to the Committee men, appointed pay masters,

19. And if a bill amounted to forty pounds they would pay twenty, if to twenty they would offer ten, and so in proportion, ordering the party to sign a receipt in full of all demands; if he refused, the money was taken up, and he was told he should not receive anything.

20. And the Landlords in general being poor men, necessity compelled their compliance.

21. But a certain Landlord, by name DON BENJAMINE,§ whose bill amounted to six hundred pounds, was not paid a farthing, to the utter ruin of the man and family.

CHAPTER VII.

Verse 1. **B**UT behold, amongst other Publicans who went for payment was an arch wag, by name Joseph,|| who then kept the sign of the Sun, and hearing in what manner the Committee for payment proceeded, wisely made his bill for much more than double what liquor he had drawn, and carried it for payment.

2. On Joseph presenting his bill, the Committee, without hesitation, tendered him half the sum, but which he at first refused, seeming amazed, saying, He thought the gentlemen would have had more honour than to have served him so, but at length he signed the receipt, and pocketed the money.

3. And having so done, Joseph, smiling, said, Gentlemen, the BITER IS BIT; I thought how it would be, and managed accordingly. Each quart of ale,

* 12th August, 1762.

† March, 1761.

‡ George Porter.

§ Ben Keen, of the King's Head.

|| Bradshaw.

instead of fourpence, I charged sixpence, the score being set on the back of the door, and in the morning, when the Inspectors came to look at the reckoning, I turned the door upside down, which reversed the Sixpences into Ninepences, and so I can very well afford to take TEN SHILLINGS in the pound! Your Servant, Gentlemen!

4. Soon after these things had been completed and ended, the learned Serjeant, 'Squire James, paid another visit to the Chiefs and Elders, and having met them as usual, addressed them as follows—

5. Respectable and worthy friends, I am now come amongst you to disclose the heads of the plan I have formed whereby you and your posterity might have a greater enjoyment of power and wealth than ever your forefathers enjoyed, and be raised by the like means to the pinnacle of glory.

6. I must agree in sentiments with some of you that the frequent swearing of Freemen will prove highly injurious to our interest.

7. The late Election proves that at present we have a majority on our side; let us therefore keep it, and determine, for that purpose, to swear in no more Freemen.

8. The Government of BABLAKE, I will engage, shall be fully wrested out of the hands of your avowed enemies, the Steeple-house Crew.

9. This being accomplished (and I will undertake it shall), you will then become possessed of the sole power of bestowing that charity occasionally to such Freemen only as prove your friends,

10. And previous to an Election, you may promise Bablake to everyone that solicits the favour, in consideration of their promising to serve you.

11. And having so done, they must, you know, worthy friends, wait for their turns, on which account it may happen they will be obliged to vote for you twice before they can be once served themselves.

12. Therefore, the full acquisition of the Government at Bablake is a point of the utmost consequence to your interest.

13. The above, joined to the advantage you now enjoy of having it in your power to promise and grant the Fifties, Four Pounds, and other such like Charities, as well as the power of granting and refusing Licenses to the Publicans, will make you able to cope with the most powerful opponents.

14. And be sure you give directions to the High Constable not to oppress our friendly Publicans by quartering soldiers upon them, except at particular times, and then very sparingly,

15. But be sure you do not let him forget to punish the Jacobite Publicans by burthening them continually with as many soldiers as in his power lies,

16. And peradventure this kind of oppression may be a means of bringing over several of the Freemen who are Publicans to our interest.

17. And KNOBBY arose and said, I assure your Honour that our High Constable is no bungler in the art of FLEEING; he does it very well, I assure you,

18. For where he thinks people are not able to provide for soldiers (the Tories I mean) for want of convenience, there he sends the most, the consequence

of which is, the party, aggrieved, apply to him to remove the men.

19. At first he tells them it is out of his power to oblige them; they propose treating him with a glass of something good, feel his pulse, giving him a squeeze by the hand; he pockets the affront, and instantly gives them a fresh billet for the removal of the men. . . . Ah, he is deep! There is no knowing the money he makes this way, exclusive of the great quantities of fowls, bacon, and greens he receives as presents and is invited to partake of.

20. They all commended KNOBBY for his honest speech, and a loud laugh ensued upon the occasion.

CHAPTER VIII.

Verse 1. **A**ND the learned Serjeant again addressed the Chiefs and the Elders, saying,

2. From what I have already communicated to you, you cannot but perceive that you are in likelihood of becoming more powerful than any of your predecessors,

3. But, worthy friends, I have formed a much more important plan for your interests and emoluments than you are aware of.

4. Yes, and it is such a scheme as will not only give you almost universal power, but enable you to exert your darling ROD of OPPRESSION still more and more.

5. At the time you will be most able to oppress your foes, you can shew favours to your friends, of which great advantage may be made.

6. The learned Serjeant, having proceeded so far, was interrupted by the smiles, raptures, and joyous expressions of the Senators, who were highly delighted at what they had heard from 'Squire James, on whom they bestowed the epithets of COMFORTER and PROTECTOR, and he became of exceeding high estimation amongst them.

7. And Ezekiel said, That though he was stricken in years and waxen old, yet the good and comfortable words he had heard from the pious Serjeant had inspired him with such new spirits and vigour that he thought himself become young again.

8. And Ezekiel proposed to give a sentiment,

9. And KNOBBY cried aloud, Charge your glasses,

10. And every one filled his glass.

11. And Ezekiel took up his glass and said, To the happy time of having it in our power to oppress those we do not like, and to favour those that will do as we bid them.

12. And they all drank off their liquor, and immediately gave three huzzas,

13. And having after a short time become silent, the learned Serjeant, 'Squire James, proceeded to speak as follows—

14. Now, worthy friends, I have to inform you of the grand plan I shall proceed upon as soon as I shall have fully wrested the Government of BABLAKE from your avowed enemies, the Steeple-house Crew.

15. I say, Gentlemen, the next business I shall proceed upon will be that of framing a Bill, to be

passed into a law, to levy a certain payment, as poundage, for cleansing, paving, and enlightening the streets.

16. Now this tax, if the Act is passed, will lay a heavy burthen upon the inhabitants in general, and may, as far as you please, prove oppressive,

17. For as all appeals for redress of grievances will come before you, you may favour those you think proper, and give a deaf ear to those you would wish to distress,

18. As the Bill shall be so framed that your determination shall be final.

19. And the better to strengthen your power, I will insert the names of many of you, with many other of our staunch friends, to be appointed Commissioners for carrying this intended Act into execution

20. You will have the power of appointing Assessors and Collectors.

21. Now as the Assessors will receive a great deal of trouble, without the least emolument, it may not be improper to appoint persons to such offices as are not favourable to your wishes,

22. And as for Collectors, I recommend they may be your friends, as an allowance of poundage will be paid for collecting the money.

23. I shall contrive it so that the tax may be fixed at Eighteen pence in the Pound, agreeable to the rent of each house,

24. And this tax will raise a large annual sum, all which will come into your hands, and you will have the entire disposal thereof.

25. And you will have the appointment of Scavengers, Paviers, and other workmen, all whom you may choose out of those who will render you service.

CHAPTER IX.

Verse 1. **A**ND the Senators and Elders were well pleased at the Bill for "Enlightening, cleansing, and paving the streets," which the learned Serjeant had framed and intended to present to Parliament to get passed into a law.

2. And 'Squire James, according to his promise, did present the Bill to the Lower Assembly, who suffered it to pass their House, and sent it to the Lords for their concurrence.

3. But behold, in the Upper Assembly it met with great opposition from the Noble Earl of D—h,* who so opposed the oppressive schemes and designs of the Serjeant and his beloved friends the Corporation, that it was dismissed the House for that Session, with orders, if it was attempted to be brought in again, that it should receive several amendments.

4. And this proved very mortifying to the learned Serjeant, the Noble Lord of Umberslade, and the Chiefs and Elders, and caused much mirth to the Tories, who laughed exceedingly.

5. This check to 'Squire James's proceedings damped the spirits of his warmest friends, but in a short time they again revived,

6. For behold, the learned Serjeant, soon after the said disappointment, accomplished one of his great designs by obtaining a final law determination in favour of his friends, giving them the Government of Bablake, and wresting the same entirely from the hands of their avowed enemies, the Steeple-house Crew.

7. This event gave great satisfaction to the Chiefs and Elders, and the Whigs in general at Coventry; several expressions of joy were shown, and, amongst others, the bells were set a-ringing, but they continued doing so only a short time, the Churchwardens for the time being putting a sudden stop to them, thinking it highly improper, as officers of the Church, that any tokens of gladness should issue from the Steeple in behalf of a people who always expressed such a dislike to it.

8. In the following Session of Parliament, 'Squire James re-assumed his former attempt by presenting a new Bill to Parliament, with amendments, for "Enlightening, cleansing, and paving the streets,"

9. And in this Session the learned Serjeant proved successful, carrying his design into execution by getting the Bill to pass through both Houses and become a law.

10. But alas! the news thereof proved very vexatious to the opposite party,

11. And the bad effects of it are experienced to this day, the Corporation having used their darling rod of oppression to its full extent, to such as differed with them in opinion, by making them pay to the utmost extremity, whilst those whom they esteem their friends have, upon application, been excused paying at all.

12. And the obtaining this Act, commonly called the Scavenger Act, proved highly to the interest of the Corporation, giving them extraordinary power, and thereby compelling many poor men, against their inclinations, to become subservient to them.

13. And the Corporation, on account of their great increase of power from this circumstance, and having become sole Governors of Bablake, made themselves certain of carrying any future Election, in opposition to the most vigorous exertion of the Tories.

14. And the Chiefs and Elders refused to have any public Enrolment of young Freemen, agreeable to the advice of the learned Serjeant, but admitted privately as many of their own friends as possible.

15. And on account of the certainty they were under of not being opposed by the Tories, they became inactive, not soliciting the votes of any persons,

16. And though a vacancy for a Member of Parliament happened in 1766, by the promotion of the learned Serjeant, 'Squire James, by King Nebuchadnezzar the Third, appointed for political reasons a Judge, yet the Tories were so dispirited as not to offer a Gentleman on their account as Candidate.

17. But the late learned Serjeant, in return to the Earl of Hertford, then at the Head of the Ministry, for having interested himself in his promotion, gave his interest to the Right Honourable H. S. Conway,

* Dartmouth.

son to the said Earl, recommending him to the Chiefs and Elders and the rest of his friends, by which means he was elected Member for the remainder of the Session without opposition,

18. And the Whigs in general flourished greatly till the succeeding General Election, when unexpectedly they were much alarmed and thrown into confusion, as will appear in the following Chapter.

CHAPTER X.

Verse 1. **A**ND it came to pass, in the eighth year of the reign of King Nebuchadnezzar the Third, that according to septennial custom, the Great Assembly of the Nation was dissolved, and Mandates issued for electing new Members.

2. Upon this occasion, the Freemen were in expectation of a bustle, as usual, but, to their great mortification, everything became quiet, not the least application being made to them for their votes, and they were beheld as a set of useless beings.

3. Indeed, in the morning before the day fixed for the Election, the late Members, the Honourable Andrew, son to the Lord of Umberslade, and the Honourable Henry Seymour Conway, son to the Earl of Hertford, made their appearance to their own select friends for a short time, and then proceeded to the Castle of a Nobleman, distant about ten miles from the City, to dine and spend the day, promising to return in the morning, expecting only to go through the necessary forms and be returned without any opposition or the least trouble.

4. Albeit they were mistaken, for their total neglect and disregard of the Freemen made them grievously angry, and caused them to pray with the greatest devotion that some Gentlemen would start up in order to give them an opportunity of being asked for their votes and showing their resentment,

5. And from what immediately happened, one would be led to think that the devout prayers of the honest Freemen were regarded by the powers above, and that Whiggish ingratitude was intended to be punished,

6. For behold, unexpectedly to everyone, a Gentleman and a Lady, on their return from Shropshire, in their way to London, stopped at a capital Inn in the City, kept by Mr. Garner Pickering, a worthy TORY.

7. And WALTER WARING, Esq. (for that was his name), having received such refreshment as he and his Lady thought proper, desired to speak with the Landlord, who, being come into the room, he desired to be seated.

8. And then the 'Squire proceeded to ask of Mr. Pickering, of the Black Bull, Smithford Street, how matters went on respecting the Election, and whether there was any likelihood of being an opposition.

9. And Mr. Pickering proceeded to inform the worthy 'Squire of every circumstance, particularly the disrespect shown to the Freemen by the Members and by the Chiefs and Elders, who were so very certain of succeeding as to bid defiance to any that might attempt to oppose them.

10. And the 'Squire immediately spoke in this manner, It is very proper that every Elector should be solicited for his vote, and though no opposition appears, yet the same, or greater civility should be shown by those who expect to be elected than if they were to be opposed.

11. And (continued the 'Squire) do you imagine that if a Gentleman at this late hour should offer himself a Candidate, that the Freemen would embrace and give him encouragement, and if so, there would be any probability of success?

12. Mr. Pickering answered, He was certain that if a worthy Gentleman could be found, the honest Freemen would gladly embrace his offer and give him every possible support.

13. And though he could not ensure him at so late an hour his election, yet he would engage that the opponents would be run hard,

14. And that if he failed in this sudden attempt, it would in a great measure ensure him success at any future vacancy. And Mr. Pickering further said, I beg, Mr. Waring, you'll stand the friend of the Freemen, and offer yourself.

15. The worthy 'Squire hearkened with attention to what had been told, and, looking earnestly at his lady, said, Well, Madam, what is your opinion?

16. And the Good Lady answered, I recommend it to you by all means to offer yourself, for it is a shame the honest Freemen should not be asked for their votes.

17. And 'Squire Waring determined immediately as his Lady advised.

18. And Mr. Garner Pickering immediately sent to his brothers, who were manufacturers, and to other eminent and principal Gentlemen, who directly repaired to the 'Squire at the Bull Inn to pay their respects, where also the Freemen of Independent principles immediately assembled.

19. And 'Squire Waring immediately declared himself a Candidate,

20. And the 'Squire and his friends instantly set out on their canvass, being the afternoon preceding the day of the General Election.

CHAPTER XI.

Verse 1. **A**ND behold, the procedure of 'Squire Waring in standing candidate much affrighted the Chiefs and Elders, and they communed with one another, saying, What is to be done?

2. And it was determined to despatch a messenger with utmost expedition to the two late Members, then at the Castle of a Noble Earl, whither they had gone to spend the day, to inform them of the strange matter that was come to pass, and which was accordingly done.

3. And behold, when the messenger arrived at the Castle of the Noble Earl of Warwick, the company was just sitting down to dinner, being towards the decline of the afternoon.

4. Howbeit, the unexpected disagreeable intelligence so affected the stomachs of the two Honourable Gentlemen that they retired from table with the greatest

precipitation, and returned to Coventry with all possible expedition, and as soon as they arrived, in company with their friends, began their canvass.

5. Everything was now carried on with the utmost spirit on both sides, but the Whigs were sorely afraid that they should be defeated by surprise.

6. And the honest Independent Freemen expressed their gratitude to their new Candidate in a manner that will do them honour to the latest posterity.

7. They not only gave assurances of their warmest support in behalf of the good cause he was engaged in, but generously declared they did not desire to put him to the least expense, and went through the fatigue of the Election with wonderful spirit, sticking close to the poll booth, though it rained hard, and when they were hot and thirsty, opening their mouths to catch the rain-water to quench their thirst.

8. And 'Squire WARING harangued the Freemen in ingenious speeches suitable to the occasion, and on account of his public-spirited behaviour, they called him the little WELSH PONY, saying they would back him against any Corporation Horse in the kingdom.

9. And Madam WARING paid her compliments to the Freemen and their wives in the most respectful manner, which had a great effect upon the hearts and minds of the people, she having a graceful person and a delightful, pleasing countenance, being of a most amicable disposition.

10. And during the time of the poll Mrs. WARING stood at the chamber window of Mr. Hill, an eminent grocer, opposite the poll booth, decorated with blue and white ribbons, shaking her handkerchief at the Freemen, encouraging them all in her power, which added much life to the cause and won the hearts of the people, who cried aloud, God preserve your Ladyship.

11. Howbeit, at the close of the poll there appeared a majority against 'Squire WARING, and his opponents, the Hon. Andrew, son to the Lord of Umberslade, and the Hon. Henry S. Conway, son to the Earl of Hertford, were declared duly elected, to the great joy of the Chiefs and Elders and to the Whigs in general, but to the grievous mortification of the Tories.

12. However, the little WELSH PONY, considering he started so late, run a good race, and was beaten but by two or three lengths, and it was generally believed that if he had started in time, he would have won the City plate.

13. Howbeit, in a short time afterwards died the Noble Lord of Umberslade, father to the Honourable Andrew, who on that account was called up to the Upper House, and his seat in consequence in the Lower Assembly became vacant.

14. And a rosy hue now glowed in the faces of the Tories, imagining the time was at hand that would enable them to elect their favourite friend, 'Squire WARING, and accordingly, for that purpose, an invitation was immediately sent to him at his seat in Essex.

15. The 'Squire received the invitation with proper respect, but gave sufficient reasons why it was then inconvenient for him to stand as candidate, and recommended to their choice his worthy friend, Sir Richard

Glyn, Baronet, whom the worthy Freemen approved of, and he came to the City and declared himself a candidate.

16. On Sir Richard's entering the City, great honour was shown unto him, the principal independent gentlemen and Freemen meeting him, accompanied with flags and streamers and a band of music; and at another time, on the Baronet's entering the City, he was honoured in like manner, with this addition, that the Freemen took the horses from his carriage and drew him through the streets.

17. And the Chiefs and Elders, in opposition to Sir RICHARD GLYN, set up 'Squire Nash, a linen draper, of London, and the canvass was carried on for several days on both sides,

18. But on the Saturday night before the day of Election Mr. Nash grew sick, and suddenly disappeared.

CHAPTER XII.

Verse 1. **N**OTWITHSTANDING, however, Mr. NASH's sudden disappearance, out of vexation, and by way of giving the Tories trouble, a number of Whigs, at the instigation of the Chiefs and Elders, subscribed their names and demanded a poll in the behalf of Mr. Nash. Accordingly a booth was erected, and a regular poll went on for five days, in the same manner as if Mr. Nash had been present; but at length Sir Richard Glyn, Baronet, was declared duly elected by a large majority.

2. The Whigs now looked upon themselves as totally defeated, and that their interest was gone, and became grievously vexed, whilst the Tories exulted much.

3. And a very sumptuous chair was made, covered with white satin, ornamented with a canopy and a plume of feathers, decorated with blue and white ribbons, in which Sir Richard Glyn was chaired the day after the close of the poll, in a very grand and sumptuous manner, he being carried through every street of the City, attended by a great number of the principal gentlemen of all his voters, with different Company streamers and flags flying and music playing, whilst several were singing joyous songs, and bells ringing.

4. The procession was so extensive that it took near half an hour to pass a point,

5. And behold, the Whigs were so mortified that but few of them were to be seen in the streets on this day, and the next evening Lady Glyn gave a ball in honour of her husband Sir Richard's success, her Ladyship having, during the canvass, visited and paid her respects to most of the Freemen's wives.

6. Sir Richard, the day he was chaired, on the steps of the Cross, made a spirited speech to the Freemen, in which he paid much respect to the memory of a former worthy Member of theirs, William Groves, Esq., deceased, relative to his Independent Principles among them. He would also act Independently, and that he would endeavour to restore them to their Rights, Privileges, and Franchises which had been shamefully

withheld from many of them by the Corporation; and to the same purpose also spoke the surviving William Groves, Esq. (son of the before-mentioned), as did also John Bird, Esq., late an Alderman of London, since deceased; and so animated was every word those gentlemen spoke that what they said penetrated into the very hearts of the long-injured Freemen, who expressed their approbation with shouts of applause.

7. And as the worthy Sir RICHARD GLYN had said, he performed his promise, for he soon afterwards caused Writs of MANDAMUS to be served upon the Mayor and Corporation, for them to show cause why they did not swear and enrol several Freemen; and in several causes that were tried in the Court of King's Bench, a verdict was obtained against them, which was very mortifying unto them.

8. And the good Sir RICHARD continued taking other steps against the Chiefs and Elders, in order to recover for the Freemen their long withholden Rights; and he from time to time so perplexed those Mighty People that his name became terrible in their ears.

9. And behold, this worthy Baronet, about four years after he had been elected, was suddenly called upon to pay that tribute to Death* which we must all do, and his departure was much lamented and regretted, not only by his constituents, but by the nobility, gentry, and all ranks of people (the Whigs of Coventry excepted) who had the happiness in his acquaintance, and for whose loss his most amiable Lady became almost inconsolable, as the Baronet, when living, possessed all the virtues of the real gentleman and man of honour.

10. There being now a vacancy for a Member to represent the City, the Independent Freemen again despatched a messenger to their old friend, Walter Waring, Esq., with an invitation for him to become their candidate, which having accepted, he came to the City, and was chosen without opposition† in the twelfth year of the reign of King Nebuchadnezzar the Third, and about two years before the General Election.

11. A short time after this event, the Right Hon. Lord Craven, on behalf of the Independent Freemen, obtained the ever-to-be-remembered Mandamus Act, which rendered his Lordship in the highest estimation among the Tories, and secured him their interest against a future election.

12. And it came to pass, in the ninth month of the fourteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar the Third, that the Lower Assembly of the Nation was dissolved,

13. And Walter Waring, Esq., and E. Roe Yeo, Esq. (the latter esteemed as a friend of Lord Craven's), declared themselves candidates in the Independent interest,

14. And the Chiefs and the Elders firmly believed that their friend and late Member, the Honourable H. S. Conway, would again offer himself as a candidate in their behalf.

15. They applied to the Earl of Hertford, but he was regardless of them, because they had offended

him by ungratefully turning him out of the office of Recorder, after he had procured places and pensions for several of their body! and peradventure Lord Archer had it not in his power to assist them.

16. Alas! under these circumstances, no recourse had the Chiefs and Elders but to the Steward of their own Court, Councillor Green, who (as nothing would do without opposition), at their request, became a candidate, and a regular poll commenced on the Saturday following, which continued five days, when Walter Waring and E. Roe Yeo, Esquires, were declared duly elected by a large majority, to the sad mortification of the Whigs, who looked upon this event as the total overthrow of their power. Howbeit, great joy appeared among the Tories, it having been upwards of seventy years since they had been able to elect two Members in their interest before.

17. And the two elected Members were chaired in much the same pompous and splendid manner as Sir R. Glyn was at his election, and Madam Waring had attended during the election, as she had done at a former time, to canvass for her husband, and on the charring day Lord Craven came to the City to congratulate his friend Mr. Yeo, and pay his respects to the Freemen who had given him their suffrages, on which account elegant entertainments were provided for his Lordship, the Members, Gentlemen, and Freemen, and the evening was concluded with the utmost festivity and joy.

18. And be it remembered that the next morning (being Sunday), the good, considerate, tender, humane, and Right Honourable Lady Craven, imagining that many of the working Freemen, on account of the time they had lost in attending to the election, would be at fault how to provide for their families, very generously offered that every Freeman who voted for Mr. Yeo should be called upon with her Ladyship's compliments, and that a five shilling and threepenny ticket should be given to everyone who would accept of it, and her Ladyship's kind and seasonable relief made the hearts of many hundreds glad that otherwise would have been very sad for want of a dinner. Matters grew from bad to worse between the Government and the British North American Colonists. In April the Whigs of London petitioned in favour of the Americans, and "asked for the dismissal of Ministers who had advised obnoxious Acts as the first step towards a redress of those grievances which alarmed and afflicted the whole people."

19. After this time nothing extraordinary happened, until a meeting was held by the Tories in order to address King Nebuchadnezzar the Third relative to the refractory behaviour of a part of his subjects in his Colonies abroad, recommending coercive measures, and promising to assist His Majesty to the uttermost,

20. And in opposition to which the Whigs called a meeting, for the purpose of petitioning His Majesty not to proceed against his refractory Colonists, but to put a stop to the war, which they called bloody and inhumane.

* 31st December, 1772.

† 25th January, 1773.

21. These proceedings caused much discord among the people, particularly quarrels amongst the opposite parties, and what amazed the Tories was that Lord Craven should meet the Chiefs and Elders and sign the Whiggish petition.

22. Behold, 'Squire Yeo carried up the address of the Tories to His Majesty, and because he afterwards refused to carry up the petition of the Whigs, Lord Craven became exceedingly angry, and caused humorous burlesque prints of the "'Squire" to be given away, and a downright quarrel ensued between them.

23. But the Tories were not far behind his Lordship, for of him they also published humorous burlesque prints, and the populace behaved very abusive to his Lordship on one occasion as he passed through the streets.

24. On this account a paper war commenced.

25. But be it remembered, that if the Tories had said half as much against the Government in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar the Second as the Whigs did in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar the Third, a great part of the inhabitants had been committed to prison for treason.

IV. IMPROVEMENTS IN THE CENTRE OF THE CITY, 1790-1820.

Page 209, lines 23 to 36. This account very inadequately explains the contemplated improvements to the centre of the City at the time. They did not take place at once, but between 1790 and 1820. Although several schemes were thought about, it took some years to develop and perfect them. Much opposition arose, as is evidenced from the bills of the period, and the first scheme had to be most considerably modified, if not wholly abandoned. Lord Eardley, M.P., in 1790, obtained "*A Bill for the Better Paving, Cleansing, Lighting, and Watching of the City of Coventry and the suburbs thereof, for removing and preventing nuisances and annoyances therein; and for widening and otherwise improving the streets and regulating the public wells and pumps within the said City and suburbs.*" (See page 201.) The Mayor and thirty-four principal inhabitants were constituted Commissioners for carrying out the provisions of the Act, and authorized to make and levy a rate not exceeding eighteen pence in the pound yearly, and to borrow money on the security of the rates. The management of the streets was

regulated by this Act up to the passing of the Public Health Act in 1848. The Bill of 1790 had certain properties situate at St. John's Bridge (West and East sides thereof), Ironmonger Row, Cross Cheaping, Broadgate (West side thereof), and Smithford Street (North side thereof) scheduled, as more particularly affected by the Act, and the widening of St. John's Bridge (the Burgess) and the setting back of the front of the Free School was brought about in 1794. A project to widen Greyfriars Lane fell through, and Hertford Street was made under an Act "for improving the public roads in and through the City of Coventry, 1812." (See page 242.) The still greater improvement of widening Broadgate from a narrow and dangerous thoroughfare of from 16 to 20 feet in width to an open space of about 85 feet, followed in 1820, when the blocks of property intervening between Cross Cheaping, Broadgate, and Smithford Street, were taken down, and a new western frontage building line, continuous with Cross Cheaping, adhered to.

V. MR. W. W. BIRD, M.P., AND THE RIBBON TRADE OF COVENTRY.

Page 203, line 11. The ribbon trade was introduced into Coventry about the close of the seventeenth century, being established by a member of the Bird family. Mr. William Bird, *Silkman*, was Mayor in 1705; Mr. John Bird was chosen M.P. for Coventry in 1734 (see pages 151 to 153); Mr. Robert Bird contested the City in 1747 (see page 157); whilst Mr. Thomas Bird, who died in January, 1746, was, says the "*Coventry Mercury*" of that time, "one of the most eminent silk manufacturers

in England, in which branch of business he daily employed 2,000 persons." The family resided in an ancient mansion on the west side of Little Park Street, Coventry; the site whereof is now occupied by the new buildings of the Coventry Machinists Company. Mr. William Wilberforce Bird, M.P., continued as a silk merchant and ribbon manufacturer at Coventry until the close of last century, and his name appears in a list of ribbon masters in 1795. He

is thought to have resided in the Town for some time after this (*see page 235*), became Member for Coventry in 1796, but subsequently passed many of the latter years of his life at the Cape of Good Hope, where he held the appointment of Controller of the Customs. (*See page 267.*) From an interesting letter, written by a lady member of the family on the 24th January, 1894, it appears his eldest son was also named William Wilberforce Bird, and held a position in the Bengal Civil Service, and that "the name of Wilberforce came into the family through a Mr. Wilberforce marrying a Miss Bird, who was an aunt to the first W. Bird." "I may mention," says the writer, "that Miss Penelope Wheler (daughter of the Rev. Sir Charles Wheler, M.A.), was the second wife of Mr. W. W. Bird. His first wife, who died shortly

after her marriage, leaving no children, was his cousin Miss Bird, sister of Mr. Robert Bird, of Taplow. He (Mr. Robert Bird) married his cousin Lucy, sister to Mr. W. W. Bird; so these two Mr. Birds were not only cousins, but doubly brothers-in-law. Another sister of Mr. W. W. Bird married Mr. (or Dr.) Sumner, Rector of Kenilworth, and father of John Bird Sumner, Archbishop of Canterbury, and Charles Sumner, Bishop of Winchester." There are paintings of Mr. W. W. Bird, M.P., and his wife (*née* Penelope Wheler), still in the possession of the family, but, unfortunately, copies cannot be now obtained for reproduction in this work. Mrs. Penelope Bird's portrait is said to be a charming one, by Gainsborough, whilst that of her husband is not only less attractive, but is thought not to have done him justice.

VI. ADDITIONAL NOTES ABOUT MR. W. MILLS, M.P.

Page 236. Mr. William Mills, M.P., was born at Barford, Warwickshire, 10th November, 1750. He married Miss Elizabeth Digby on the 7th April, 1786, by whom he had a numerous family. His father, who was Rector of Barford, died in 1791, and his home ceased to be there. He removed to Bisterne, Ringwood, Hants, about the year 1798, and not about 1790 (*line 35*), but his mother survived, and lived at Barford Hill until 1807. Doubtless, whilst visiting her there, he wrote his first and following addresses

to the Coventry Freeman, for his first is dated at Barford, 11th May, 1805, but some subsequent addresses were written from Bisterne. Mr. W. Mills was first chosen for Coventry 21st May, 1805; he was re-elected 29th October, 1806, and 9th May, 1807, and sat until the Parliament came to an end in 1812. He was related through his mother to Mr. Wilberforce Bird, M.P., and not through his wife (*line 21*). He died "in London, on the 18th March, 1820, in the seventieth year of his age."

VII. ELECTION LITERATURE OF THE REFORM BILL TIMES, AND EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY CHRONICLES.

The political handbills and literature just previous to the passing of the Reform Bill of 1832 were exceedingly numerous, and their contents somewhat appalling to look at. Hickling, Knapp, Bromfield, Rollason, Reader, and T. Turner seem to vie with each other in producing rough and spicy literature of a very unique character (*see pages 283 and 295*), and their broadsheets, although of an unrefined character, must have brought in a considerable sum of money, for large numbers were sold. Their contents need not here be particularized. The Chronicles were written as "catch pennies," but contained a considerable amount of

drollery. Published by different printers at various times, they are but fragmentary, and—written by partisans—often one-sided. Amongst those first met with in the nineteenth century is "the Book of Chronicles," published by "Turner, Printer, Coventry;" the first and the second chapter records the return of Mr. Joseph Butterworth in 1812, and the subsequent return of Messrs. Moore and Ellice in 1818. From a footnote to the Chronicle, it appears that in his maiden speech Mr. Butterworth had declared himself "a friend to civil and religious liberty, and would vote for a free trade to India," but subsequently "voted for the renewal

of the East India Bill, in opposition to his former declaration." Mr. Butterworth had voted for the Standing Army, but went against the Supply, whereupon verse fourteen wittily remarks:—"Moreover, Joseph raised unto himself a mighty army, to shield himself against the hatred of the people. Yea, even an *hundred and forty-nine thousand*; but Joseph gave them *no bread*, and they were well-nigh perishing." Mr. Butterworth was not returned in 1818, and his friends presented him with "a vessel of gold." "The Chronicles of Abomelek, King of the West," had appeared earlier, and were a skit, published about 1811, against the late Mayor, Basil Goode, Esq. They allude to Municipal matters, and not Parliamentary. Most of the political nineteenth century Chronicles appeared before the passing of the Reform Act. In 1830 (*see page 283*), W. Rotherham, printer, Fleet Street, Coventry, issued at his circulating library the "Chronicles of the Yellows," in four chapters. They are written in praise of Mr. Ellice, and commence about 1826, at the return of Messrs. Fyler and Heathcote. At the same time, five

chapters of the "Chronicles of the Indigoes" appeared, "printed for the author and sold by S. Passey," at the "Original Free Press Office," Pepper Lane, Coventry. They were written against Mr. Ellice and the Whigs. W. Hickling, the printer of Earl Street, published Chapters one and two of the "Chronicles of the Procession of the Yellow Fly," and four chapters of the "Dark Doings of the Worshippers of the Yellow Fly," Fly being an abbreviated nick-name for Mr. Fyler. All these productions were inferior to the eighteenth century Chronicles. W. Hickling's "Book of the Chronicles," published in 1831, reached three chapters; written in disparagement of Mr. Fyler, Messrs. Ellice and Bulwer were praised. In 1832, "The Chronicles of Bilcliffe," Nos. one and two, appeared. They were printed and published by S. Knapp, opposite the Barracks, at Coventry, in aid of the Whig candidates; whilst Hickling published the "Second Book of the Chronicles of the Skies and Indigoes;" two chapters appearing; and the "Chronicles of the Philistines;" in four chapters.

VIII. CORRECTIONS.

Page 57, line 8, read Jonson.

Page 69, lines 18 and 20, read Berkeley.

Page 102, line 16, and page 236, line 20, read Wheler.

Page 153, line 5, read Mr. Neale, not Mr. Bird.

Page 308, line 30, read Stephenson.

Page 320, line 41, read Bryan.

Page 365, line 41, and page 374, lines 21 and 26, read 1868, instead of 1869.

Page Appendix, viii.: line 26, second column, read 4 instead of 3; and line 31, read 3 and 5. instead of 4 and 5.

FINIS.

Part I.

Price 1/6



THE
Parliamentary Representation

OF THE

CITY OF COVENTRY

FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES TO PRESENT DATE.

BEING AN ACCOUNT OF THE VARIOUS ELECTIONS, CONTESTS, PETITIONS,
LIVES OF MEMBERS, BROADSHEETS, CHRONICLES, PAMPHLETS,
SONGS, &c., &c., FORMING THE POLITICAL ANNALS OF
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BY

T. W. WHITLEY,

*Author of "Humorous Reminiscences of Coventry Life," "Castles, Camps, and Earthworks of Warwickshire,"
"Coventry Coaching and Coach Roads," &c., &c.*

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